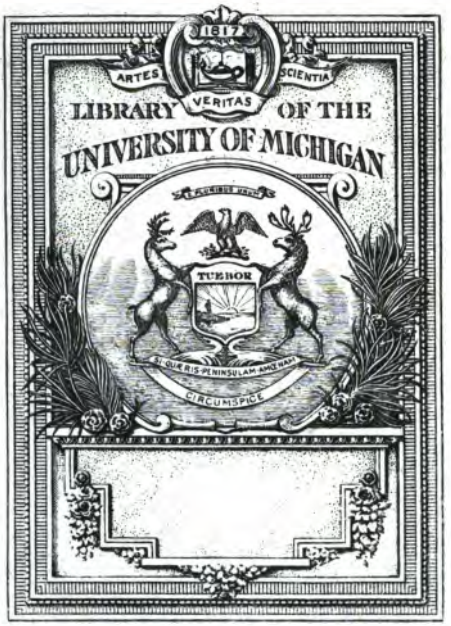
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2 — Bugbears.
3 — Letters to the Author.
4 — Do.
5 — Abuse of Liberty.
6 — Letter to y Author
7 — Of Divisions.
8 — Do.
9 — Plays & Masquerades
10 — Of Genius
11 — Uncharitable Contentions about y Does of y Trinity
12 — Address to Persons of Figure & Estate, & all in General

W. Norman Jr.
March 8th 1782.

Henry Norman. August 6, 1754.

A

COLLECTION

OF THE

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

For the Year 1718.

VOL. III.

With a PREFACE; and a *Table* of CONTENTS.

Prodesse quam conspici.
Lord *Sommers*'s Motto.

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THE PREFACE.

I *Now present my Readers with a* Third Volume of Occasional Papers. *They who found the former Volumes useful and entertaining, I hope will not be disappointed if they read this with the like Expectations.*

The general View of these Papers is LIBERTY, *within the Bounds of Reason and Religion. This is what will be always dear to wise and good Men, though the Stupid and Indolent, and vitious part of Mankind would give it up, and those who lust for unlimited Power and Dominion do their utmost to drive it out of the World.*

I have exprest my Concern for Religious Liberty, *though I have at the same Time guarded against all the Abuses of it. In vindicating this Freedom, I have (in mine own Opinion at least) been contending for the* Faith.

For if a Man must not judge *for* himself, *he may be a* Papist, *a* Lutheran, *a* Calvinist, *or of what* Name *and* Party *he pleases; but he can't be a* Christian: *Since every Disciple of Christ must have* a Reason to give for the Hope *that is in Him. He must first be persuaded of the Truth of the* Christian Revelation, *and then act according to what* he (*himself, and not Another*) *apprehends to be the* Sense *of it.*

For mine own Part, I am so well convinced of the Truth of the Scripture, *that I never fear being reasoned out of that Conviction: And am so entirely satisfied of the Sufficiency and Perspecuity of it too, in all Matters of Consequence, that while I have common Sense and common Honesty, I fear never an* Heretic *of them all. The Weapons of Reason and Argument are at the Service of those who differ from me: But as for all Sorts of Carnal Weapons, I am for sending them back to the* Philistines, *where they were first forged.*

I am very sorry that this gross Heresy *of* Persecution *has still so many Votaries, and particularly where I least expected it. That those harmless Lambs, who, to my Remembrance, have been bleating against Persecution these Thirty Years, should now bite and devour one another; who would have thought it? That these innocent Doves should, in the very sight of the Hawk, and not far out of*

his

his Reach, yet be pecking at each other, after all their mournful Notes on Account of Oppression, is what I should not have imagin'd. I wish those good People well; and should any resent my Way of expressing my good Wishes, I shall only say, " It is the Railliery " of a Friend."

This Quotation leads me to add, That such as are conversant with those Polite Performances, *which used to sooth the Mind, when it had been ruffled with the Quarrels of Parties in the declining Years of the last Reign, will not wonder, that I am here led to mention, with Honour and Respect, the late Excellent Mr.* Addison. *His Interest in those instructive and fine Pieces, will make his Memory dear to Posterity, as long as Wit, Humour, Good Manners, Liberty, Vertue or Religion, have any Interest in* Britain. *I should reckon my self wanting in my Respect to all, if I did not, on this Occasion, drop a Flower on his Grave, and shew my self affected with so publick a Loss. I am the rather led to it, because some of my Readers have been so kind, to make him the Author of my Lucubrations, at least of some of them. Tho' I cannot commend their Judgment, and know them to be grosly deceived; yet there is not a little Satisfaction in being mistaken for such a Man. I am indeed pursuing the same Ends, though in a different manner, and with*

very

very different Abilities: And I should be very much discouraged at the little Good done by my Essays, in proportion to what I wish; were it not too visible that his much superior Sense and Abilities, and much better Performances, have had such small Success, and done so little to refine the Taste, or direct the Manners, of my Countrymen.

It is a Satisfaction to have endeavoured well; I am sure my Intention has been, to do good: I set out (as my first Preface *declares) with an Heart full of good Wishes to my native Country; and to those who are devoted to the Service of Truth, Vertue and Religion: None of which, I am fully persuaded, will ever suffer from any Notions of Liberty I have advanced, or endeavoured to propagate. A* Licentiousness *in Thinking, and Acting too, is what I heartily abhor; though I would have every Man make the best use of his* own Reason *about those Matters, that are his dearest Concern, and wherein no other Man can be accountable for him. I have declared against all* abusive Notions *of* Liberty, *both in Matters of* Faith *and* Duty. *I have endeavoured to serve the laudable* Zeal *of Those who are concerned for the Credit of the* Commandments, *as well as to guide the Zeal of such as are contending about* Articles *of* Faith.

It

It is with peculiar Pleasure, that I reflect on my Essays *to serve the Honourable* SOCIETIES *for* Reformation of Manners. *I wish All, to whom I have addrest on their Behalf, would give themselves leave to look over with Care, what I have there laid together. I cannot but hope it would rowze many of the Friends to Religion and Vertue, and engage them in the Design. I am sure this is what I heartily wish, and sincerely proposed.*

I shall only add my Thanks, to those GENTLEMEN *who have encouraged Me by their Approbation, and especially by their Assistance: The Continuance of both which is earnestly desired, by*

Their humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.

The CONTENTS.

Number I. *Of Retractations.*

A Readiness to change one's Mind and Practice, on Conviction, as essential to an honest Man, as a Love to Truth and Goodness, *p.* 3. Men liable to Error, should be open to Conviction, *p.* 4. An Argument of a great Mind to prefer Truth to all Considerations, *p.* 5. Change of Sentiment to be owned on proper Occasions, *p.* 6. No honest Man at liberty to profess or act contrary to his real Sentiments, *p.* 7. Ingenuous Retractation, a Piece of Justice to Truth, *p.* 8. Would befriend Truth if encouraged, *p.* 9. As necessary from Religion as Reason, *p.* 10. Countenanced by the best Examples, *p.* 11, *&c.* Christianity cause in on this foot, *p.* 13. The Reformation from Popery, an Instance of Retractation, *p.* 15. A free Allowance of ingenuous Retractations, fit, in Countries where Protestant Principles are embraced, *p.* 16. Yet discouraged on all Hands, *p.* 18. By all Methods of Violence in Popish Countries, *p.* 19. By negative Discouragements in other Places, *p.* 20. Almost in every Place, by Neglect and Contempt, *p.* 21, 22. Prudence to be used in making Retractations, *p.* 23, 24. Mr. *Pilliamiere's* just Commendations on this Head, *p.* 25, *&c.*

Numb. II. *Of Bugbears.*

Occasion of the Title, *p.* 3. What a Bugbear is, *p.* 4. Several Instances, *p.* 6. Impressions of this kind easily made on the Mind, and keep long Possession, *p.* 7. Roman *Auspicia* such Bugbears, *p.* 9. Omens, Dreams, Prognostications also, *p.* 12. Ignorance of the Cause of Things, the Parent of such Bugbears, *p.* 14. Men naturally prone to superstitious Fear, *ibid.* Bugbears in Trade, *p.* 17. In Academies, *ibid.* No Man a Politician without a good Collection of them, *p.* 21. Never have been more numerous or pernicious than in Religion, *p.* 22. Ecclesiastical Bugbears among Papists, *p.* 23, 24. Not confined to that Church. Heresy, Schism, Nicknames, such Bugbears, *p.* 26. The Mischief done by them, *p.* 27, 28.

Numb. III. *Two Letters.*

I. To Dr. *Prideaux*, on Occasion of a Passage in the first Volume of the Connexion of the History of the Old and New Testament, concerning Liturgies, and bearing hard on Dissenters, *p.* 4.

II. A Letter to the Author, upon another Passage of the Doctor's; in the Preface to his Second Volume, relating to the Rule in the Common-Prayer Book for finding *Easter*, and reflecting on Dissenters, *p.* 36.

Numb.

Numb. IV. *Four Letters.*

I. One to the Author, on that Passage in Dr. *Bisse*'s Sermons on the Beauty of Holiness in the Common Prayer, *p.* 148. *viz.* "It was a remarkable Saying, founded on the "Reason of Things, that a preaching Church cannot stand, "*&c.* *p.* 3.

II. Remarks on a Passage in Dr. *Bisse*'s, and another in Dr. *Lupton*'s Sermons before the Sons of the Clergy, concerning the Authority of the Fathers, in interpreting Scripture, p. 8.

III. A Letter from Mr. *Pillonniere* to the Author, allowing him to publish a Letter from Mr. *Cotton Mather* of *New-England*, *p.* 23.

IV. Mr. *C. Mather*'s Letter, printed from the Original, *p.* 25.

Numb. V. *Of the Abuse of Liberty.*

The Liberty asserted in these Papers, such only as is reasonable, just, and Christian, *p.* 3. Should not be abused, *p.* 5. Should be used with Decency, *p.* 6. Should not be made to patronize acting without Thought, or an hasty Change of Sentiments, *ibid.* Nor to encourage any seditious Behaviour, *p.* 8. Men prone to abuse Liberty. Hard to avoid Extremes. *ibid.* Pride a common Cause of the Abuse of Liberty, *p.* 9. And Vice, *p.* 10. And intriguing Ambition, *p.* 11. No Reason to take away the just Liberty, because it is abused, *p.* 12, 13,--- 17. many Evils proceed from the Abuse of Liberty, *p.* 17. It doth Mischief to the Person himself, *p.* 18, 19, 20. It brings a Scandal on just Liberty, *ibid.* Regard to natural Right, and the Laws of the Land, a Mean to prevent the Abuse of Civil Liberty, *p.* 22. To keep within the Bounds of GOD's written Law or the Holy Scriptures, as proper to prevent the Abuse of religious Liberty, *p.* 24. An Address to such as are apt to run into this Abuse, *p.* 26.

Numb. VI. *Four Letters.*

I. Relating to the Removal of the Incapacities of Protestant Dissenters, *p.* 3.

II. Another on the same Argument, *p.* 8.

III. Queries about Coercion in Matters of Religion, *p.* 14.

IV. A Letter with a *Latin Epitaph* on Bigotry, *p.* 22.

Numb. VII. *Of Divisions.*

Mischiefs of Discord, *p.* 3. Differences in many Cases unavoidable, *p.* 5. Discord and Strife too common on account of different Opinions, *p.* 6. This much worse than an involuntary Mistake, *p.* 8. Attempts to bring Men to an Oneness of Expression in Matters of Faith, or Uniformity in Worship, very mischievous to the Church, *p.* 10. Quarrelling the too

common

common Attendant of Controversy, *p.* 11. Differences about the Trinity a great Occasion of Quarrel. A remarkable Passage of *Melanchton* on this Subject, *p.* 12. Divisions arising from Mens Ambition and Intrigues for Power and Preferments, *p.* 13. Regard to private Advancement or Gain, hurtful to the Public, *p.* 14. Different Principles in Prime Ministers mischievous, *p.* 17. As are Contests for Power and Superiority, where there is no Disagreement in Principles, *p.* 19. Unless in preventing the Mischief a bad Prince might otherwise do, *p.* 20. Such contending Statesmen apt to ruine one another, *p.* 21. A Quotation from a Sermon of Bishop *Stillingfleet*, p. 23, 24.

Numb. VIII. *Farther Thoughts upon Divisions.*

This Subject seasonable, *p.* 3, 4. Pride the great Cause of Divisions, *p.* 5. In some Constitutional, in others proceeding from external Incidents, *p.* 6. Common among learned Men and Divines, *p.* 7. Little People often conceited without Reason, *p.* 8. Interest added to Pride enflames the Quarrel, *p.* 9. Passion and Fretfulness create Discord, *p.* 12. As do Suspicion and Jealousy, *p.* 13. Mens native Inclinations to Society should check Discord, *p.* 15. Division destroys the grand Intention of Society, *p.* 16. Union increases Power, *ibid.* It a Mark of Wisdom, *p.* 17. Division will ruine the best Constitution, *p.* 18. A dividing Spirit contrary to the Laws of Christ, and Christian Temper, *p.* 19. A Letter to the Author on the Paper, N°. V. *Of the Abuse of Liberty*, p. 21.

Numb. IX. *Of Plays and Masquerades.*

Plays and publick Actings have been ancient, may be useful, *p.* 3. Such hardly to be expected from the *English* Stage, *p.* 5. Great Mischief done to our Youth in general by them, especially the trading part, *p.* 6. They mightily inflame vicious Inclination, by giving a Relish to vain and brutish Pleasures, *p.* 7. Their Plan romantick, *p.* 8. The Conduct of Plays intriguing, *p.* 10. Both give a wrong Turn to Men of Business, *p* 11. Stage ruins Truth, *p.* 12. Mischievous to Servants and Children before Marriage, *p.* 13. Corrupts the Taste after Marriage, *p.* 14. Mischiefs done by Plays summed up, *ibid.* Some Quotations from Mr. *Collier*, *p.* 15, 16. The Sense of the Legislature concerning Players, *p.* 17. Great Men concerned to avoid these Pleasures, because expensive, *p.* 18. And will much debase them in the Opinion of Mankind, especially Masquerading, *p.* 19. No good Policy to give into these Diversions, *p.* 20. A Quotation from the *Free-Thinker-Extraordinary* to this Purpose, *p.* 21. The scandalous Original of them in *England*, *p.* 22. A serious Address here-

hereupon to great Men, *p.* 24. To Divines, *p.* 26. and to Magistrates, *ibid.*

Numb. X. *Of Genius.*

The heathen *Genius* p. 3, 4. Difference between *Genius* and *Ingenium*, *p.* 5. Inclination with a due Proportion of Vigor and Force what completes a *Genius*, *p.* 6. Vast variety of Inclinations among Men, *p.* 6, 7. This the wise Order of Providence for the greater Harmony of the World, *p.* 7. Resemblance between this Harmony and that of Sounds, pursued in several Instances, to *p.* 14. Harmony is a Variety of Things, mixt in an apt and agreeable manner, *ibid.* Variety of Powers and Inclinations among Men thus agreeably mixt, *p.* 15. This a wise Provision for the common good, *p.* 16. Men should follow *Genius* in the Choice of Employments, *p.* 17. And Parents consult it in the Education of Children, *p.* 18. A *Genius* capable of Improvement, *p.* 19. True *Genius* must be discovered that it may be improved, *p.* 21. Must be supplied with Matter to work upon, *ibid.* Must not be overstrained, *p.* 22. Must be exercised and assisted, *p.* 23. A *Genius* spoiled by Disuse, *p.* 24. 'Tis often prejudicial to be fettered by Rules, *p.* 25. It is ruined by wrong Application, *p.* 27. Should not grasp too much, *p.* 28. May be hindred from exerting it self by bodily Weakness, Vice, Passion, Party Quarrels, *p.* 29, 30. Yet is there Encouragement to improve a Genius, *p.* 31.

Numb. XI. *Of uncharitable Contentions about the* Doctrine *of the* Trinity.

Variety of Opinions do much Mischief, *p.* 3. This not to be remedied by Authority, *p.* 4. Whether mutual Forbearance and Charity would not be a better Method? *p.* 5. This need not abate any just Concern for Truth, nor set aside any Christian Means of defending it, *ibid.* The unhappy Controversy of this Time, about the Unity and Distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *p.* 7. Improper in this Point to oblige Men to receive any other Determinations than what the Scriptures have given, *p.* 8. A more particular Decision of this Matter than what the Scriptures have made, too hard for human Determination, *p.* 9. Terms to be used for this Purpose must be very abstracted and above the Reach of common Christians, *p.* 10. Christ and his Apostles considered the Weakness of those whom they instructed, and adapted Themselves to their Capacities, *p.* 11, 12, 13. Objection started about the Importance of the Doctrine, *p.* 14. It cannot be necessary to determine any Thing concerning it, which the Scriptures have not determined, *p.* 15. Scriptures a perfect Rule of

of Faith. What is so, must be so complete as to need no Addition, so evident as to need no Interpretation, in necessary Points, *p.* 16, 17. The Importance of those Points an Argument against their being determined by unscriptural Decisions. *p.* 20. An Objection about lawful Consequences from Scripture. These must be distinguished from the Authority of Scripture it self, *p.* 21. Humane Determinations in this Point impossible, *ibid.* No Authority established for making such Determinations, *p.* 23, 24. We should be cautious of bringing in Philosophy to make these Decisions, *p.* 26. Such Determinations very dangerous and prejudical to the true Ends of Religion, greatly increase the Causes of Divisions, *p.* 27. New Quarrels about the Meaning of these Determinations, *p.* 28. They make Opposers obstinate, *p.* 29. Much Mischief done by them to Practical Religion, *p.* 30, 31.

Numb. XII. *An Address to Persons of Figure and Estate, and to all in general, with Relation to the Societies for Reformation.*

How Persons of noble Birth and Rank might encourage the Design. Such address't to, *p.* 5. Their Example would prompt Men of Wealth and Substance to bear the Expence, *p.* 6. Those who by the peculiar Blessing of GOD have been enriched, should consider what they owe of this kind in Point of Gratitude, *p.* 7. Rich People address't to under several Heads of Distinction, *p.* 8, 9. They who neglect this Cause, should consider how far they are chargeable with the Guilt of abounding Wickedness, *p.* 10. Men of Wisdom, Prudence, Knowledge in the Laws and Dispositions of the People, address't to, *p.* 12. All Men of Note intreated to countenance the Societies by their good Example, *p.* 13. Those who can do nothing else should afford some of their Time, *p.* 14. This every good Man's Concern, *p.* 15. The Scandal of turning Informers removed, *p.* 16, 17, 18, 19. Merely to inform, is no ill Thing, *p.* 20. Nothing can be a greater or more universal Concern than this, *p.* 21. Indifference in this Cause unaccountable, *p.* 22, 23. The Societies Rules duly regarded, would remove all Prejudices against them, *p.* 25.

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. I.

OF RETRACTATIONS.

Recognoistre sa faute, Confesser son doubte ou Ignorance, Ceder quand il faut sont tours de Jugement de Candeur & Sincerité, qui sont les principales Qualites d'un honneste & sage homme, l'opiniastreté accuse l'homme de plusieurs vices & defauts.

Charron *de la* Sagesse. L. ii. c. ix. §. 13.

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(Price Four-pence.)

OF RETRACTATIONS.

LOVE of Truth and Goodneſs is not more Eſſential to an honeſt Man, than a readineſs to change his Mind and Practice upon Conviction that he is in the wrong. Indeed theſe Two are inſeparably connected in our preſent fallible Condition. Poſſibly thoſe, who are arrived at a better State, may get clear of all their Miſtakes, as well as their ill Habits, immediately; and yet be capable of an endleſs Improvement in Knowledge, by having their Minds extended ſtill to diſcover farther Objects, and new Relations of Things, which they had no Notions of before: Upon this Suppoſition, they may receive continual Additions to their Store, and yet have no occaſions to change their former Sentiments; becauſe they were right, as far as they went. But I am ſure in this Life we find frequent

reason to give up mistaken Opinions, as well as to take in additional Light.

We cannot but perceive ourselves liable to innumerable Errors, even when we are most careful to avoid them, from our Ignorance in the Nature of Things, or in the Use and Meaning of Words. We take up Opinions or engage in Practices, thro' the Influence of Education, Friendships and Alliances, or in the heat of Opposition and Prejudice, which cannot be maintain'd upon more exact Enquiries, or in cool and impartial Thoughts. Prevailing Opinions insensibly gain the Possession of our Minds, and have commonly the Advantage of being the first Comers; and yet are very often no better than prevailing Falshoods, directly the Reverse of Truth. We are all too apt to be misled, where the Safety of our valuable Interests, or Peace with our Neighbours, appear to depend upon a particular Sett of Principles, or upon falling in with a Party: A Man can hardly forbear wishing those Things to be true and right, which he apprehends it would be for his Convenience to find so: And many Persuasions, when they are narrowly look'd into, plainly appear to have had no better a Foundation.

It must therefore be highly reasonable to examine our Sentiments; and always to lie open to Conviction and farther Light upon better Consideration of a Case, and to be willing to profit by the Diligence and Enquiries of other Men. Without this, Reason would be given us in vain; Study and Converse would be useless and unprofitable Things. It would be much happier for us to have no Advantages

tages for better Instruction, or no Capacity to improve by them; if we must necessarily be stak'd down to those Apprehensions of Things, either in Religion or otherwise, which we have happen'd to light upon. That Man only, who is ready to change his Mind upon proper Conviction, is in the Way to come at the Knowledge of Truth. He, who is neither ashamed of his own Ignorance, nor unwilling to receive help from any quarter towards the better Information of his Mind, or afraid to discard an old and favoured Opinion upon better Evidence; he, I say, will find Truth kindly open before him, and freely offer it self to him; he will be surprized with the noble Pleasure of a new Discovery, and his Knowledge will be always progressive as long as he lives. But a Man tenacious of his first Thoughts, is necessarily concluded in Error, if ever he happens to mistake; and he is much more like to have Mistakes thick sown in his Mind, than another who is jealous of them, and has long endeavour'd to discern and shake them off. When People once arrive to an Opinion of Infallibility, and have made their *Last Understanding*, they can never grow Wiser than they are already.

'Tis an Argument indeed of Levity and Weakness of Mind, to change our Opinion upon every slight Appearance, or to give it up to the Authority of Others. But it argues a real Greatness of Soul, to have always a Regard to Truth superiour to every other Consideration, and to feel an undissembled Pleasure upon the discovery of it. If Truth is *Divine* and Eternal, 'tis the natural *Hommage*

of

of a Reasonable Mind to yield to its powerful Light, and embrace its lovely Form, where-ever it appears: 'Tis *Superstition*, to be fond of an old Opinion not supported by it; *Idolatry*, to adore the Image and false Appearance of it; but open *Profaneness*, to neglect and contemn it. The only acceptable *Sacrifice* here, is that of our darling Prejudice; and the offering of an upright Mind, like the Perfume of Incense.

But a hearty Lover of Truth will not content himself with a meer Change of his Sentiments upon Conviction, concealed within his own Breast; but will ingenuously acknowledge his Mistake as freely and as publickly as he had avowed it: Which is the Thing I Mean by *Retractation*; and is a Subject, which I think it well worth my while to spend a Paper upon.

I pretend not to affirm, that a Man is obliged in every Case to acquaint the World with the Alteration of his Judgment. In trivial Matters certainly it is needless to trouble other People with our Apprehensions one way or another: Or if the Change of Sentiments ends, in its Influence, within our private Thoughts, and does not necessarily lead to a visible Alteration in our Practice. And where Prejudices are so strong and general against that which I am convinced to be true, that I can have no rational Prospect of any better Success, if I should let my Mind be publickly known, than to inflame others and do myself a Prejudice; it may, for ought I know, be no blameable Policy to enjoy silently my own Persuasion, if I can be allowed to do so with-

without any Profession contrary to it, either in Word or Practice. And yet even in that Case, a Man, who is persuaded he has Truth on his Side, will think it a Reflection upon the Age or the Place he lives in, that he cannot be allowed a fair Hearing without Offence: Every Man thinks so in his own Case at least, whether he be so just, or not, to esteem it an equal Hardship, that other People should be confined.

But an honest Man is not at Liberty, even in the minutest Point, to profess or act inconsistent with his Sentiments of Truth or Right: And therefore, as far as he must declare himself one way or another upon such Things, he must disclaim what he takes to be wrong. Where Mistakes are apprehended to be of considerable Importance to the Honour of Almighty God, or the Good of Mankind, 'tis a noble and generous Conduct to bear a publick Testimony against them. Especially when a Man has any way published his Opinion to others and spread a Mistake, it becomes a Piece of natural Justice to endeavour to set them Right, where he hath led them Wrong; and to let them know the Evidence upon which he hath received Conviction. It would be cruel to leave others under a Delusion, into which we were the Occasion of bringing them.

The same Frankness and Sincerity, which makes me declare my self of one Opinion at one Time, will oblige me to declare my self of Another afterwards, if my Sentiments are really alter'd.

We

We owe this Justice to Truth, as well as to Mankind; if by a plausible Representation, or a false Colouring, we have made an Error to wear its Aspect, to strip that Error of its Disguise, and shew the Thing in that better Light in which it now appears to us. 'Tis a noble Passage of the Great Mr. *Locke*, when, upon a closer Inspection of the working of the Mind, and upon a stricter Examination of the Motives and Views by which Men are sway'd, he found Reason to alter his Thoughts concerning that which gives the last Determination to the Will in all Voluntary Actions. These are his Expressions *, 'I cannot forbear to acknowledge This 'to the World, with as much Freedom and 'Readiness as I at first published what then 'seemed to me to be right: Thinking my self 'more concerned to quit and renounce any 'Opinion of my own, than to oppose That 'of another, when Truth appears against it; 'for it is Truth alone I seek, and That will 'always be welcome to me, when or from 'whence soever it comes.' And in the same Book I find the following admirable Lines. '† In the former Edition of this Treatise, 'I gave an Account of my Thoughts con'cerning them (*the Idea's of Will, Volition, Li'berty and Necessity*,) ' according to the Light 'I then had: And now, as a Lover of 'Truth, and not a Worshipper of my own Do'ctrines, I own some Change of my Opini-

* *Pref.* to *Essay on Hum. Underst.* 5th Edit.
† *Essay.* p. 181.

on,

'on, which I think I have discovered Ground 'for. In what I first writ, I with an un-'biassed Indifferency followed Truth, whi-'ther I thought she led me: But neither be-'ing so vain, as to fancy Infallibility, nor so 'disingenuous as to dissemble my Mistakes 'for fear of blemishing my Reputation, I have 'with the same sincere Design for Truth, 'only, not been ashamed to publish what a 'severe Enquiry has suggested.'

Certainly, were this Temper generally prevailing, it would above all things befriend free Enquiries after Truth, and be of the greatest Benefit to the World. It would dispose to a generous Largeness of Mind, to make all due Allowance to Others, as well as to claim a just Liberty to Our selves, without any Insinuation of Jealousy or Reproach. Men would not be ashamed to acknowledge a Mistake, or injure their Consciences by Dissimulation, or submit to the Meanness of being content to be thought of another Mind than they really are. 'Tis indeed low *Servitude*, not to dare to own the Truth, whether thro' inordinate Love of Our selves, or Fear of other Men.

And indeed from the Wise and the Good, it may be hoped that a Man can have little to fear for such a steady Regard to the Dictates of Truth. It must rather conciliate to a Man an honourable Regard from all, whose Esteem is worth desiring. For such a Person appears disinterestedly honest, as well as he feels in himself the Satisfaction of being so. He shews, that his own Interest and Credit are of little Weight with him, in Compari-

ſon of the Honour of Truth. Shall not ſuch a Man be thought worthy to be heard in any thing he has to offer? When the ſtrict Adherer to his own Opinion once taken up, tho' perhaps only upon the Credit and Authority of others, without any Examination for himſelf, is very apt to be tranſported with indecent Zeal and uncharitable Suſpicion, and plainly appears more deſirous that *his* Opinion ſhould be *true*, than that *Truth* itſelf ſhould prevail.

Converſation with a Man of an ingenuous Temper is much more eaſy and agreeable, when he is willing to hear the Reaſons of others, as well as to offer his own; and appears indifferent whether his Arguments ſhall convince me, or mine ſhall prevail with him, according to Evidence; and is readier to receive it as a favour if he can profit by me, than to triumph upon a ſuppoſed Conqueſt. This Man treats me upon the Square: Debates upon theſe Terms would be carried on with equal Pleaſure and Advantage, and Society be one of the moſt improving and entertaining Things in the World. But a Man, that is determined to maintain every Principle he has in Poſſeſſion, and tho' he be ſilenced in Argument, will ſtill hold the Concluſion, and never own a Conviction, deſerves to be baniſh'd the Society of all modeſt and ingenuous People, as an aſſuming Dictator to his Neighbours.

To be always ready to retract an Error, is as neceſſary from *Religion*, as from *Reaſon*. That indeed is wholly grounded upon ſuch a Temper and Diſpoſition. He, who is proud

proud enough to think himself altogether free from Faults and Mistakes, is void of all Truth, and must be abhorred of that Being who sees and knows all things. And he who is conscious that he has been misled, and yet too stout to own it, or to change his Course of Practice, stands excluded from the very Pretensions to Christianity; the first and leading Doctrine of that being *Repentance*: And indeed every true Penitent is an Instance of Retractation, of a Change of Mind and Practice: And by Consequence every Man, who has propagated an Error, can no more hope for the Divine Favour, without endeavouring to set Men right, when he sees he had led them wrong; than a Thief can expect Divine Mercy, without making all the Restitution in his Power.

And indeed in such a candid Management we shall find our selves countenanced by the greatest and best Examples. Wise Men in reality own themselves fallible every Day of their Lives, by some Change or other in their Actions and Behaviour, even when they may not chuse to have every retracting Step in their Conduct put into Words.

Queen *Elizabeth*, in the last Year but one of Her Reign, set forth a Proclamation against Monopolies, of Her own Granting; as soon as She was made sensible by the Enquiries of Parliament, that She had been misled. Whereupon the Commons ordered their Speaker, attended by 80 Members, to return Her Majesty Thanks. She gladly took this Occasion to heighten Her own

Character, as well as gratify Her People, by using these gracious Expressions among others; 'I owe you hearty Thanks and Commendations for your singular Good-Will towards Me; not only in your Heart and Thoughts, but which you openly expressed and declared; whereby You have recovered Me from an Error proceeding from my Ignorance, not my Will.' How different an Impression must this generous Acknowledgment of that Great Queen make on the Breast of every good Subject, from the false Grandeur, which one of Her unhappy Successors was desperately resolved to maintain? When He had assumed a Power to dispense with the Laws by admitting Papists into Offices of Trust, and his Parliament humbly remonstrated against it, He had no other Language for Them, than *I resolve to be obeyed.* *Thus well for him, he resolved afterwards to run away!* What is a Repeal or Explication of an Act of Parliament, but in effect a Retractation made by the whole State, when they see Reason for it, and the Matter amended appears upon farther Light not to have been for the Publick Good, or prejudicial to it?

The main Body of the Beneficed Clergy at the Revolution were a famous Instance of the necessity of Retractations; when by swearing to the Successive Governments of King WILLIAM, Queen ANNE, and now of King GEORGE, they have so clearly deserted the Doctrines, which seemed to be their greatest Favorites and the most usual Themes for employing their Eloquence and Zeal half an Age ago.

And

And may we not hope, that that venerable Body, as well as the Laity, will be ready to shew the same Ingenuity, in discarding any other Principles, which have still the ~~the~~ Honour of such learned Advocates, and continue to be set off in the best Colours they are capable of, as soon as the growing Light of this inquisitive Age shall convince them that they are mistaken?

They know, that Christianity itself came in upon this Foot; and that every Man who ~~who~~ embraced it, either *Jew* or *Gentile*, retracted a great number of Opinions and Practices, which he had received by Education. Tho' there is one *Dawson* among our Clergy, who has thought fit to quote with Approbation that Advice of a Heathen Statesman to *Augustus*, *That he should follow constantly the established Religion of his Country; because all Innovations would foment Sedition in the State, and be a means to Subvert his Government*; I will never allow myself to believe of any other Christian Clergyman, that he will second *this Doctor* in recommending that Advice, till he shall declare himself as openly as he has done against the only way, by which Christianity could have obtained Admission into the World.

Nothing brightens the Character of the Great Apostle St. *Paul*, more than that entire Change of his Principles, to the full Assertion of Christian Liberty, from the most outragious Bigotry of a blind Persecutor. He generously owns all his former Delusions, and aggravates them so as hardly any Christian would chuse to do after his full Acknowledg-

ledgment. And, with all the just Pretension he had afterwards to Infallibility as an Apostle; yet where he had not a proper Claim to that, no Man was more ready to acknowledge himself mistaken upon Conviction. Whatever he precisely meant, when he said, *I wist not, Brethren, that he was the High-Priest; for it is written, that thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People:* It plainly shews a Readiness in that Great Man to retract any Thing that was amiss, and to correct himself even upon the Spot. Immediately in their Presence, who made him sensible of it, and that with the most unfriendly Mind, without any Regard to the Advantage his Enemies might make of his Concession, he quotes against himself a Place of Scripture, upon Supposition that he had offended against it.

None are recorded with more Honour in the History of the Church, than such as retracted their former Opinions upon Evidence. *Beryllus*, Bishop of *Bostra*, when he was convinced by *Origen*, that he had fallen into some Errors about the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, frankly acknowledg'd it, and wrote *Origen* a Letter of Thanks, as the Ancients tell us. This Declaration of his honest Mind, conveys his Character to all future Ages much more to his Honour, than his coming to be Orthodox consider'd in itself could do, how bad soever his Errors before were. St. *Austin*'s Retractations are never to be forgotten upon this Subject. He wrote two Books of them, and revised them a little before his Death, whereby he has gained as just

just a Reputation, as by any of his Works. The great Mr. *Chillingworth*, upon a double Change of his Sentiments, was equally illustrious for Integrity. He was first a Protestant; but the Jesuit *Fisher* taking advantage of some Scruples he had, brought him over to the Church of *Rome*. Afterwards he thought himself out of those Entanglements, retracted the Popish Errors, forsook that Church; and when he was converted, endeavour'd to strengthen his Brethren by his incomparable Book in Defence of the Protestant Religion; which, as long as Reason, Scripture, Modesty and Conscience have place in the World, must be in high Regard with all that understand it. The Name of a fickle Turn-Coat might be applyed to him by designing Leaders on either Side, and it might serve some Party Purposes: But I never met with any Man, who gave fuller Evidence of the Sincerity of his Conduct in all the Changes of his Sentiments.

The *Reformation* from *Popery*, (which is nothing else but a Renunciation of the Corruptions brought into the Church by the Papacy under the Christian Name, and a Return to the *Bible* as the only Rule and Measure of Christian Faith and Practice;) wherever it was admitted, was an undeniable Instance of *Retractation* in every one that was engaged in it. *Luther* and *Calvin*, *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, and all, who first embraced the *Protestant* Religion, had been *Papists* before, but upon Conviction retracted what they esteemed the Errors of *Popery*. The Reformation was founded upon every Man's Right

to

to enquire into the Sense and Meaning of his Bible, and to judge for himself by that Rule what was the Religion of Jesus Christ; and then his Obligation thereupon to profess according to his Sentiments, *i. e.* to retract and disavow all that in Religion, which he thought not to consist with the Mind of God revealed in Scripture.

This makes it peculiarly suitable in all Countries, where the Protestant Profession is embraced, that a free Retractation of all Sentiments in Religion, which are thought by any Person not to have Christ's Authority, should not only be tolerated, but countenanced and encouraged; because this is the very Basis of the Protestant Religion. Nothing more contributed to the sudden spreading of the Reformation among the most judicious Observers of it, than the plain Marks of Honesty which appeared in those who were first engaged in it, that they gave credible Evidence that they were honest Enquirers after Truth, and then were frank and open Men to speak their Minds and alter their Practices in Religion, as they thought they found Christ's Mind in his Gospel, without and against the Biass of their secular Interest.

And this being the Principle of the Reformation, it is not to be thought strange that there should appear more frequent Instances of People's changing their Opinions in Protestant Countries than in Popish. In Popish Countries, the main thing inculcated is a blind Obedience to the Church, which naturally fixes Men in a stupid Adherence to

old

old Opinions and Customs right or wrong. But the Protestant Doctrine, as well as the Bible itself, leads all to search the Scriptures; and no wonder if that produce an Increase of Light, and new Discoveries of old Errors, from time to time. The Advantages of being better inform'd, which We have above those under the tyrannical Power of *Rome*, carry honest Minds, of Course, to discern remaining Corruptions, one after another. It was a wonder, that Matters were carried so far upon the first dawn of Light, after a long and gross *Egyptian* Darkness. But to say, that nothing must be retracted beyond what was done by the first Reformers, is in Truth to make Apostles of them; when certainly they were, and always professed themselves to be, as fallible Men as our selves.

They set out upon that Foot, which without doubt, if it had been adhered to and pursued, would have carried Light and Knowledge to a much greater Perfection than it is arrived at. But we seem, in the present Age, to be returning to the same free Sentiments, upon which the Reformers acted. The Revolution has gone a great way to set us right in Politicks; the Writings of my Lord of *Bangor* are curing us of many Popular Prejudices about Church-Power; and we hope from the inquisitive Genius of the Times, that Light will be struck out in many other Points of Importance, of which the rising Age at least will reap the Advantage. In such a State of Things as this, to be unwilling to retract a Mistake in Reli-

gion, meerly because it pretends to long Prescription, or numerous Adherents, or great Names to support it, is in truth to deny ourselves the Benefit of the Reformation; and to remain in fuller Slavery to old Prejudices than the Papists themselves, because we do so in the midst of clearer Light.

But however virtuous and commendable it is for a Man, upon Conviction, to make open Acknowledgment of his Errors; few have Resolution enough to merit this Commendation, in the Face of those Discouragements which every where appear in their way, and which have been a check upon Ingenuity in all Ages. The noblest Attempt that ever was made to rescue Mankind from the Bondage of Error, was the Publication of the Gospel; but 'tis well known, with what extreme Hazard to all who were engaged in the Design, this Light was ushered into the World; tho' by Degrees it made *Pagan* Darkness and Delusion to fly before it, and came at length to be countenanced by the greatest Princes in the World. Christianity was no sooner advanced into Power, but the Truth and Purity of it was miserably corrupted; and those very Weapons, which had been imploy'd by the common Enemy against Christianity itself, were used by Christians against one another. They, who had upbraided the Heathens with Injury and Outrage to them all, exercised the very same Violences upon their Brethren, who happened a litle to vary from the *Established Faith*. By these Methods

thods the Church was reduced to the most intolerable Slavery, till about two Centuries ago it began to recover its Liberty. And yet to this very Day, almost in all Christian Societies, a Man cannot be allowed to profess his Dissent from the prevailing Opinions, tho' with the greatest Modesty and Respect, without exposing himself to a thousand Mortifications.

In Popish Countries, this Tyranny reigns Triumphant. To profess a Doubt of the Truth of what they call Infallible Determinations, is the high Road to Imprisonment, and Confiscation, Banishment and Torture, and the most cruel Death. The Court of *Inquisition* seizes a Man upon Suspicion, tortures him into a Confession even of his secret Thoughts, condemns him for an obstinate Heretick, and then consigns him over to the secular Power; which must unmercifully butcher the poor unfortunate Creature, at the pleasure of those vile Hypocrites, who would be believed too tender to stain their own Hands with Blood. Few can be supposed hardy enough, with such a Train of Miseries in view, to dare publickly to enter their Dissent from Opinions thus supported. And in truth, were it a proper Method to maintain any Set of Principles in Religion by worldly Motives, their Policy would be very right to make use of the strongest that can occur to Human Nature.

Other Places, which have obtained a Taste of Liberty, and some Acquaintance with their Bibles, will not bear these enormous

Cruelties; and there Persecution, consequently, must wear a Disguise. You shall only hear of *moderate Penalties*, or at some Seasons of no more than *Negative Discouragements*. Which indeed are but worldly Motives still; and often such as are abundantly sufficient to give a very wrong Biass to People, and to restrain them from the Ingenuity of acting according to their Conviction. These Negative Discouragements shut out a Man from every Post of Honour, or Advantage, which he might be capable of in his Country, by the Favour of his Prince, or the good Affection of his Countrymen, if he thinks himself obliged peaceably to dissent from the Publick Faith, or Practice, in Religion. Let him be ever so Pious and Learned and Charitable, ever so well qualified for his Station, and entirely in the Interests of his Prince and Country; yet if he should retract what he thinks an Error, he must along with it renounce perhaps all the Subsistence of himself and his Family, and be stigmatized by the Publick Voice as a Man unfit to receive the least Regards or Confidence from the Society: While Another, who has neither Honour nor Conscience, neither Sense nor Generosity, but has this sole Merit of being clamorous for Orthodox Opinion, stands entitled to all the Priviledges and Favours of his Country. 'Tis true, a Principle of entire and steady Vertue will carry a Man thro' this, and far greater Discouragements. But certainly a Lover of Truth and Honesty, must heartily wish there

were

were no ſuch powerful Temptations to injure a fair Enquiry and free Profeſſion.

There is yet another Bar in the Way of ingenuous Retractations, which I doubt too much prevails among all ſorts of People, whether in or out of Eſtabliſhments, and which to ſome generous Minds may be more formidable than the other. A Man may endure Poverty without repining, and yet not eaſily bear the Neglect and Contempt of thoſe around him; to be run down with Noiſe and Clamour, mark'd out for a Monſter, and carefully ſhunn'd by his Fellow-Chriſtians. If a Man cannot be ruin'd by Law, or diſpoſſeſs'd of his Eſtate, or his Station in the Community; yet his Character ſhall ſuffer all the cruel Indignities that angry Zealots can throw upon it, if he dares to profeſs any thing contrary to their Scheme of Orthodoxy. He muſt be immediately diſtinguiſh'd, for popular Odium, with ſome Name of Reproach. Among the *Papiſts*, it is enough to ſay, that he is a *Heretick*: That One Word fix'd upon a Man by Church-Authority, conveys the moſt frightful Idea of him to the People, and inſpires them with Rage; which fully anſwers the Purpoſe of their Leaders; they are juſtify'd and commended after this, however cruelly they uſe him. Among Proteſtants, a baſe Character is to ſupply the Place of more cruel Treatment: And almoſt every Party has a particular Name of Reproach to faſten upon their Adverſaries. If the common People know

know not the precise Meaning of it, 'tis enough that they are taught to think it an ill Name: And if they make it to signify far worse in their confused Imaginations, than it imports in itself; or even in the Opinion of those who give it out; it will the more effectually serve the Purpose of fixing an Odium. Now the Man is singled out, he is consider'd as an infected Person, his very Breath is tainted, and his Conversation dangerous. And whoever uses him with more Humanity than the rest, is presently made an Accomplice in his Crimes, a Confederate with him against Religion and the Church. However honourable his Character was before, however fair he stood in the Opinion of the World, all his Reputation is lost at once: His plausible Behaviour only covered a false Heart; or, Pride and Self-Esteem induced him to prefer his own Judgment to the Sentiments of so many wise and learned Men; possibly you may hear, that a little Learning has made him mad. And now 'tis no Matter, how he is treated, what Turns are given to his Actions, what forced Constructions are put upon his Words, what Prejudice he receives in his Circumstances, or whether he shall be of any farther Use to the World, or enjoy any comfortable Days in it: The Badness of the Man is thought an Excuse for all. I should be glad there were no Occasion for Complaint of such Inhuman, not to say Unchristian Conduct among Protestants. And how few have the Bravery to bear

up

up against such a Torrent of Defamation?

I am sure the Man, who has Resolution to avow what he thinks Truth, in the midst of such disheartning Views, tho' he should be mistaken in his Judgment, deserves a higher Encomium from every impartial Christian, than any lazy Believer in the Church, who takes his Faith upon content without a competent Enquiry whether it be well founded. He will have, in all his Sufferings, the Approbation of God, the Pleasure of a peaceful Mind, and the Applauses of all disinterested and considerate People.

But after all, it is of great Consequence, that a prudent Manner should be observed, as well as a frank Ingenuity, in Retractations. And that Method of acting must be most proper in the Case, which will most effectually reach the Ends proposed in it. Now a Man, in retracting, would willingly be thought to be in earnest himself; and at the same time would desire to have his Conduct as useful, as he can make it, to others; that is, he would be glad to confirm those who think as he does, and convince others who are of a different Sentiment.

To obtain these Ends therefore, such a Profession of Change should be made coolly and upon deliberation. It should not have the least Appearance of Resentment, or be managed with any Heat and Passion; but plainly carry the Marks of Thought, and impartial Consideration. His present Appre-

prehensions should be deliver'd with the modest Air of a Man, who is made the more sensible, by his late Conviction, that he is liable to Mistake. It must be with a very ill Grace, that he pours out uncharitable Censures upon a Party he has relinquished, or allows himself to say all the ill Things he can of them. He may be conscious to himself, that he was really as honest and meant as well, while he entertained the Error he has now seen reason to recant, as since he came to discern his Mistake: And that certainly obliges him to maintain as good an Opinion of the Integrity of those who cannot yet see with his Eyes, as of his own. Therefore there ought to be no uncharitable Reflections upon them, as he esteems it a Hardship to have any cast out upon himself. If he exposes the Principles which now he thinks false by their supposed Consequences, he should be very careful that he impute not those invidious Consequences to all who own the Principles, any more than he discovered them formerly himself. It lies upon him to shew, by the fullest Evidence he is capable of giving, that his whole Conduct is free from Guile and Dissimulation; that there may be the less Ground to suspect it in the Part he now acts, which People are so apt to blacken with that Imputation.

A wise Man would not willingly chuse such a Season to make his Retractation, when the Principles he disclaims would interfere with his Temporal Interest, and the

the new Sentiments he espouses would be likely to promote it. Or, when any mean End is visibly served by it, the Sincerity of the Retractation will not fail to be call'd in Question; and one cannot tell how to say, it is a Breach of Charity. If Dean *Sherlock* should at this time renounce the Principles of his 5th of *November* Sermon, after the glaring Evidence that had been given of its utter Inconsistency with his present Notions and Conduct, I doubt he would find few credulous enough to imagine that he has changed his Sentiments. The World would rather take it to proceed from a Resolution to pursue his Pique against my Lord of *Bangor*, and Complaisance to his new Allies.

The Thoughts of this Essay will necessarily bring Mr. *Pillonniere's* Case into the Reader's View. The natural Simplicity of his Relation sets the Mind at rest for the Evidence of Fact. A Man feels himself most sensibly entertained with the gradual Entrance of Light, as his Eyes were opening out of the Blindness of Popish Bigotry. His frank and ready Pursuit of Truth, as it led him on to discover one Mistake after another, is an illustrious Instance of unbiass'd Sincerity. The strong Prejudices that reign in Popish Countries can never be represented in a more striking Manner, than in the Power they had upon a sensible and indulgent Father to lay aside all Tendernesses for a Son, meerly for a Difference of Opinion. It revives the Idea of

a Primitive Confessor, to see this young Gentleman bravely executing the Resolution to forsake Relations and native Land, the Conveniencies of a Plentiful Condition, and the Prospects of an advancing Fortune; to run the risque of a Seizure by his Enemies, and to put himself upon the doubtful Generosity of Strangers; becaue he could no longer bear to suppress the Light of important Truth within his own Breast. We have a Recantation full and hearty, not of the more innocent Errors of Popery only; but of the very Spirit and Temper, wherever it appears; abstracted from which its very Idolatry and Superstition would be infinitely more harmless, because these would hurt no Body but themselves. I am heartily sorry that this Generous Stranger should have met with so much of this among our selves; and still be posted for a Jesuit by the empty Noise and Din of a few Bigots; meerly because that Name is fitted to serve the same Purposes with our Populace, as that of Heretick in his own Country. The self denying Evidences he has given of the Sincerity of his Change, are worth a thousand formal Recantations: The Doctor, who was loudest in the Clamour for want of that Form, has been made appear * to have so much mistaken both the Demands and the Practice of the Church of *England*; that I cannot help thinking that his Silence upon that Head pro-

* Dr. Snape *instructed*.

ceeds

ceeds from Conviction; tho', according to his usual Manner, with great Peace, he bids Defiance to Retractation. Mr. *Pillonniere's* Modesty and Candour in saying no more ill even of the Jesuits than was necessary to his Argument, appears to me in quite another Light than to that Learned Doctor, when he blames him for not saying worse things of them. I should rather suspect a new Convert, if he came with open Mouth, to throw all the Odium he could fasten upon the Party he has forsaken. But there need no Colourings to recommend to wise and good Men the native Beauty of an upright Mind. I congratulate this worthy Confessor and my Country, upon the more becoming Reception He has met with from many true Protestants among us, and especially from our *British Noailles*: May his Lordship, and the Gentleman, to whom he has afforded so hospitable a Retreat, live to see Bigotry in its dying Agonies, and the Retractation of Errors one of the most reputable Things among Mankind!

N.B. by the British Noailles we are to understand Mr de la Pillonniere's generous protector Dr Benj. Hoadly now (April 19, 1756) Bishop of Winchester.

A Collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1716. Vol. I. with a Preface.

A Collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1717. Vol. II. with a Preface; and a Table of Contents to both Volumes.

THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. II.

OF

BUGBEARS.

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, ſagas,
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque Theſſala rides?
HOR. Epiſt. l. 2.

Who would believe what ſtrange BUGBEARS
Mankind creates it ſelf, of Fears?
That ſpring, like Fern, that Inſect Weed,
Equivocally without Seed;
And have no poſſible Foundation,
But merely in th' Imagination:
And yet can do more dreadful Feats,
Than Hags, with all their Imps and Teats;
Make more bewitch and haunt themſelves,
Than all the Nurſeries of Elves.
HUDIBRAS.

LONDON:

Printed for J. KNAPTON, at the *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard; EM. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*; J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*; J. HARRISON, under the *Royal Exchange*; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*. MDCCXVIII.

[Price Four Pence.]

OF BUGBEARS.

THE Title of this Paper is as accidental to my ſelf, as it may ſeem humorous to my Reader. I was muſing upon the laſt Subject of *Retractations*; and what Regard it may have met with, from thoſe, who are moſt concerned to give Proofs of their Wiſdom and Ingenuity, in preferring the Glory of throwing up a Miſtake, before the Shame of perſiſting in a known Error: "What "in all the World can it be, (ſaid I with my "ſelf) that is able thus to defeat the joint In- "fluence of the Reaſon of Things, the Grace "of a Chriſtian, and the Sentiments of a Man "of Honour, enquiring after Truth? The "Fear of ſinking one's Reputation, of being "called Turn-Coat, and Unſteddy, of open- "ing a Cry againſt one from thoſe who are in "poſſeſſion of the Vogue;——— theſe are all "*Bugbears.*" I had no ſooner pronounced that *laſt* Word, but it ſtuck in my Fancy. I found

it led me into some useful Thoughts; which inclined me to make it the Subject of a Paper. Frighted at the Oddness of the Thing, I flung it up again; but immediately perceiving my self an Instance of my Subject, I laughed at my self for being *Bugbear'd* out of a good Design; which I now concluded to be the more necessary. I came up to it once more; look'd at it: the *Bugbear* was gone; and in the Room of it, appear'd, plainly, the laudable Undertaking, of freeing the Minds of Men from the Power of those several Things that may justly go by that Name.

I mean by a *Bugbear*, whatsoever unreasonably hinders a Man from thinking and acting with Freedom, and according to Evidence: whatever hinders from pursuing Enquiries, or acknowledging Truths; from undertaking, or going on with, the Business and Actions of Life, which he sees just Reason for: whatever binds up a Man's Thoughts, his Courage, Resolutions, or Endeavours, and active Powers, by making Impressions upon him, which he cannot reasonably account for. Of this *Plutarch* has given as good an Account, as if he had prepared it on purpose for me. "The common Charge "upon all sorts of Passions, is, that they put "our active Capacities into a Hurry, and in "the mean time suspend and stifle our Consi- "deration. Fear alone (says he) being equally "destitute of Reason and Courage, renders us "wholly stupid, distracted, and unserviceable, "therefore the *Greeks* call it Δεῖμα, because it "binds and locks up, and Τάρβος, because it "bares the Mind. But of all Fears, none so

"dozes

"dozes and confounds, as that of the vain Religionary. He fears not the Sea, that never goes to Sea; nor a Battle, that follows not the Camp; nor High-way Men, that stirs not abroad; nor malicious Informers, that is a poor Man; nor Emulation, that leads a private Life; nor Earthquakes, that dwells in *Gaul*; nor Thunderbolts, that dwells in *Ethiope*: but he that dreads the Divine Powers (*i. e.* with the superstitious Dread of a vain Religionary, which he is speaking of), dreads every thing, the Land, the Sea, the Air, the Sky, the Dark, the Light, a Sound, a Silence, a Dream (*a*)".

"I am not so good a Naturalist (says another great Man) as to discern by what secret Springs, Fear has its Motion in us; but I am wise enough to know that it is a strong Passion; and such an one, that the Physicians say, there is no other whatever that sooner dethrones our Judgment from its proper Seat. I omit the vulgar sort, to whom it one while represents their great Grandsires risen out of their Graves in their Shrouds; another while *Hobgoblins*, *Spectres*, and *Chimeras*; but even amongst Soldiers (a sort of Men over whom, of all others, it ought to have the least Power) how often has it converted Flocks of Sheep into armed Squadrons, Reeds and Bull-rushes into Pikes and Launces, Friends into Enemies, and the

(*a*) Plut. Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας.

"French

"French White into the Red Crosses of Spain"
"(b)".

Most of the Spectres, Ghosts, and Apparitions, are Creatures of the same frighted Imagination. I say, most of them, in Civility to that part of the World, who cannot allow them all to be *Bugbears*; nor will be frighted out of a reasonable historical Evidence, by the Bugbear of its being accounted a meer vulgar Apprehension. These frightful Imaginations about Spectres, *&c.* the *Greeks* often speak of under the Names of Μορμώ, or Μορμών, and Μορμῶνες, or Μορμολυκεῖα, and Δαίμονες νυκτερεινοι; and the *Latins* under the Names of *Lemures*, *Larvæ*, *Spectra*, *Dæmones*, *Umbræ*. When Men are carry'd away with unaccountable Impressions from some disorderly Conceptions and Imaginations of Things, in their own Minds, these are called by the *Greeks* Φόβηρα, or Μορμολυκεῖα; and by the *Latins Terricula*, or *Terriculamenta*. Thus *Minutius Felix* calls all the Heathen Worship and Superstitions, and the Awe in which Men were kept by those Idolatries, *Omnes Terriculas suppliciorum (c)*. Sometimes the Powers of Tyranny, and the Threatnings of Men, go under this Name: the Terrors of which have thrown Men off their Steddiness, and demolish'd all Presence of Mind *(d)*. Sometimes 'tis applyed to Magistrates, and their Ensigns of

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(b) Montaigne's Ess. v. 1. p. 83.
(c) Cap. 37. n. 4.
(d) *Terriculas tyrannicæ potestatis fide stabili & robore animi profligare*, Lactant. de Mor. Pers. c. 16. n. 7.

Office

Office and Characters, which are an Awe upon the People (*e*): for indeed it may be applyed in any Case, where the Impression is beyond the just Measure and Consequence of Things. And so a Man may be *Bugbear'd* in Conversation; a Man of an uncommon Size and a stern Countenance, shall sometimes make a little Man, if of an easy and modest Temper, ready to imagine his own Understanding to be of as small a Size, compar'd with the other's, as his Body. A Man that is forward, conceited and bold, whose very manner of Converse has something formidable in it, that breaks in upon a Man of Humility and Caution, and disorders the just Sense of Things, which he has in Retirement, and by himself, leads me to say, That a Bully is a *Bugbear*. n.b.

'Tis no wonder the Bulk of Mankind are so much under the Influence of some vain Terrors or other. They begin so early, grow up with us so gradually, and thereby fix their Empire so surely, as hardly ever after to be thrown off, or overcome. The Hobgoblins and Spectres that have been called in to the Assistance of the angry Mother, or the peevish Nurse, when, through Ignorance or Laziness, they could no otherwise manage the Child, have never been cast out; but, like other Foreign Auxiliaries, after they have done the Jobb they were called in for, have kept Possession of the frighted Imagination to the End of their Days. These early Terrors give the

(*e*) Liv. l. 5. c. 9. *Sine Tribunitiæ potestatis Terriculis.*

tender

tender Mind such a Convulsion, as leaves a Tremor upon it throughout all the Remainder of a long Life. "Such *Bugbear* Thoughts "once got into the tender Minds of Children, "and being set on with a strong Impression, "from the dread which accompanies such Ap-"prehensions, sink deep, and fasten themselves "so, as not easily, if ever, to be got out "again; and whilst they are there, frequently "haunt them with strange Visions, making "Children Dastards when alone, and afraid of "their Shadows and Darkness all their Lives "after. I have had those complain to me, "when Men, who had been thus used when "young; that tho' their Reason corrected the "wrong Ideas they had taken in, and they "were satisfy'd, that there was no cause to "fear invisible Beings more in the Dark, than "the Light; yet, that these Notions were "apt still upon any Occasion to start up first "in their Prepossess'd Fancies, and not to be "removed without some Pains (*f*)". If it were not for the Folly of those about them, Children might be no more afraid in the Dark, than in the Sunshine: Nor should they, by any Discourse, be made to think, that there is any Difference between being in the Dark and Winking, as to any *terrible Things* in the one more than in the other. The Remedy he proposes here is worthy to be mention'd: "Let them know, that God, who "made all things good for them, made the

(f) Lock of Education, p. 144.

"Night,

"Night, that they might sleep the better, and "the quieter; and that they being under His "Protection, there is nothing in the Dark to "hurt them (g)".

Besides, in our tender Years, we are apt to heighten the vain Terrors that have been infused into us by others. Whilst Reason is in its Nonage, the Imagination is strong and amazingly fruitful. Children communicate these frightful Images one to another, and circulate the Infection among themselves, as Yawning goes round in Company. They teach one another to see Spectres in the Dark, and Visions in the Day, till every House is haunted, every Bush a Thief, and every thing they meet a Monster; that sometimes they can hardly believe their own Eyes, in Contradiction to their scared Fancy.

But to leave the *Young* Children, to take Notice of the *Old* Ones, and their *Bugbears*; altogether as ridiculous as those that attend the Hanging-sleeves and Vest.

It is almost an infinite Variety of *Bugbears* that Men have invented, wherewith to frighten others out of their Senses, and in their Turn, to be scar'd out of their own. What else were the several *Auspicia* among the *Romans*? upon which the regular and legal holding their *Comitia* depended? insomuch, that the whole Commonwealth of *Rome* was incapable of making a wise Resolution, or enacting a proper Law, or even of choosing their annual Magistrates, if the Birds in the Air did not fly right, or if

(g) Id. 246.

it chanced to thunder from an unlucky Corner of the Heavens: or, in a word, if the *Augurs* took Notice of any thing in the Sky they did not like. *Cicero* indeed observes, that this was a wise Institution, and for the Benefit of the Commonwealth; because, it subjected the Judgment of the People to the best and wisest Men in the City (*h*); but when the Peoples Heads were once turn'd with these Whimsies, and Experience had shewn, they were to be frightned successfully with such *Bugbears*, then the Cunning and the Ambitious knew how to improve it to their own Designs. Thus *Tiberius Gracchus* caused *Scipio* and *Figulus* to abdicate the Magistracy, on Pretence of something or other Unlucky at the Time of Their Choice (*i*).

When these Trifles came to be established by long Use and Custom, they began to be looked upon as sacred, and a part of Religion, and it was accounted a Prophaneness, that the Gods would avenge with some unlucky Event, if a General should pretend to fight when the *Sacred Pullets* were crop-sick, or sullen, and would not eat; especially, if, moreover, his Horse should chance to trip, and throw him, and the Colours be so fixed in the Ground, that the Ensign could not readily take them up,

(*h*) Cicero de Divinatione, l. 2. s. 35. *Quod quidem institutum Reipublicæ causa est, ut Comitiorum vel in judiciis populi, vel in jure legum, vel in creandis magistratibus, principes civitatis essent interpretes.*

(*i*) *At Ti. Gracchi literis, Scipio & Figulus, quod tum Augures judicassent eos vitio creatos esse, magistratu se abdicaverunt*, Ibid.

For

For such Things as these the Consul *Flaminius* was reckoned an Impious Man; and *Hannibal's* Victory over him, is gravely suppos'd foreboded by such Omens. I will not say, they signified nothing to *Hannibal's* Victory; for I think the Historian has shewn fairly, how they might much contribute to it, by the Fright those *Bugbears* occasioned in the *Roman* Army (*k*). For, indeed, so far was the great Genius of *Cicero* misled, tho' he saw clearly enough the Cheat of pretending to any real Significancy in these Omens, as to assert, that they ought however to be kept *as* Things Sacred; that is, to be used as *Bugbears* still; for so I will call any thing that is made sacred by the craft of Men, when there's nothing in't: and expressly declares, that the Consuls *P. Claudius* and *L. Junius* were worthy of any Punishment, for putting to Sea with their Fleet, when some unlucky Omen forbid their Sailing (*l*). Men of the best Sense have been touch'd more or less with these groundless Horrors, and Presages of Futurity.

(*k*) *Incedere inde agmen cœpit, primoribus, super quam quod dissenserant a consilio, territis, etiam duplici prodigio*; viz. *Flaminius's* Horse threw him, and the Colours stuck so in the Ground, they pretended they could not pull them up. Then says *Flaminius*, Let them dig them up, *Liv. lib.* 23. *cap.* 3.

(*l*) *Nec vero non omni supplicio digni*, P. Claudius, L. Junius *Consules, qui contra Auspicia navigarunt. Parendum enim fuit Religioni. Nec patrius mos tam contumaciter repudiandus. Jure igitur alter, populi judicio damnatus est; alter mortem sibi ipsi conscivit*, Cicero de Divinat. l. 2. f. 33.

If *Claudius Pulcher* had had any Faith in these prophetical Birds, we had lost a good Jest; for he, seeing the Poultry would not eat, threw them into the Sea, saying in Raillery, *They'll drink at least, if they will not eat.*

"Can any thing be more surprising (says the "Spectator) than to consider *Cicero*, who "made the greatest Figure at the Bar, and in "the Senate of the *Roman* Commonwealth, "and at the same time out-shined all the Philo-"sophers of Antiquity in his Library and in his "Retirements, as busying himself in the Col-"lege of *Augurs*, observing with a Religious "Attention, after what manner the Chickens "peckt the several Grains of Corn which were "thrown to them?"

To this part of the Subject belongs the Doctrine of Omens, Prognostications, and Dreams. The very Enumeration of their several Kinds, would be a tedious Work: Stumbling at a Threshold stops a Journey; or setting out upon an unfortunate Day; The spilling Salt at the Table, is a very formidable Accident; especially if it falls towards one: he's a great Man, that can avoid turning pale at it, and calling for Wine to be pour'd into the Lap to avert the Omen. Since the Revolution, there are several People to be found, who will venture to sit down at Table, tho' the whole Company should make up just Number Thirteen; and tho' I have no Faith at all in Lucky Days and Hours, yet from that Period of Time *last mentioned*, with one or two more that I could name, we have Reason to own, there *have* been such Things as Lucky Days and Hours in our Time. The Tingling of the Ear, the casual Rupture of the Shoe-latchet, the Voice of the Screech-Owl, the Sneezing to the Right or Left, the Croaking of a Raven, the Crossing of a Hare in our way, the Howling of Dogs, the Tick, Tick of a little Worm, or Spider in a Bedsted, com-

monly

monly called a *Death Watch*; all these have had their Day. But notwithstanding these Follies are pretty well worn out of the Minds of the Wise and Learned in the present Age, Multitudes of weak and ignorant Persons are still Slaves to them. And upon such People, what an Impression does it make, when a strange monstrous Fish happens to come ashoar upon our Coast? or the *Thames* runs dry, its Waters driven out by a strong Wind? What direful things were the Common People taught to discern in the *Northern Coruscations?* When my Fancy work'd the other way, and beheld the lovely Play of the sprightly Beams, and the Variety of Colours and Lights, as the Illuminations of Heaven, upon the Suppression of the Rebels. What a Disappointment it is to our Hawkers, that we have had no *Comet* appear since King *George*'s Accession? they have been Bugbearing the People with the Expectation of one, in the Names of Dr. *Flamsted*, and Mr. *Whiston*; and seem very angry, it does not appear Just when they want it. There are, I doubt not, Animadversions ready, as there were upon the *Eclipse*, and tho' both are Periodical, and according to the Law of Nature, as the Sun rising and setting, yet every thing direful that has ever been said about Comets, would have been trumpt up, and we should have heard of

——*Terris mutantem regna Cometem*, Luc.

Regnorum eversor—rubuit lethale Cometes, Sil.It.

Nunquam terris spectatum impune Cometem, Claud.

The

The Ignorance of the Causes of Things, is one Source of Superstition, and Bugbear. The poor People in some Parts of *East India* are in a terrible Fright when the Sun is in Eclipse, and good Reason, when they believe the Dragon is devouring it, and that it can be rescued only by their Prayers and Cries. If *Nicias* the *Athenian* General, had known the true cause of a Lunar Eclipse, he would never have sat still for Fear of it, while he was invested by an Enemy, whereby he himself, together with an Army of 40000 Men, (that were all either slain or taken) was made a Prisoner, and dyed ingloriously (*m*). There was nothing formidable in the Interposition of the Earth between the Sun and Moon; 'twas the Darkness of his own Ignorance made the Bugbear; and besool'd the Reason of the Man, at a Time when he had most need on't. While his Friend *Dion* fell in with an Eclipse of the Moon at the Time he was embarking for *Syracuse*: He knew it, understood it, went on with his Expedition, and drove out the Tyrant.

Besides the Ignorance of Causes, and of the Compass of the Powers of Nature, we are naturally prone to superstitious Fears. Something innate to our Constitution, that makes us susceptible of these Impressions, and subject to Pannics. I make no doubt, but Fear, and Guilt, have a more sure Connexion than some Men are willing to own: nor is it at all in my Design to insinuate, that any thing that is justly the Object of Fear is a Bugbear. Just Apprehensions, reasonable in their Spring, and use-

(*m*) Plut. of Superstition.

ful

ful in their Tendency, are as becoming our Nature as any other Passions of the Mind. They belong to us, are planted in us, on purpose to do us good, and keep us out of Harms way; but the artificial Impressions made upon our Weakness by designing Men, by false Terrors; and the needless or hurtful ones, to which others give up themselves, or, into which they are betrayed; these must always wear that Name, whatever Opinion the Vulgar may have of them.

As if the Numerous Bugbears to disorder the Reason of Men in their waking Hours, were not enow, they have found out a way to continue the Gambol thro' the Four and twenty Hours. *Dreams* make a considerable Article of this Subject, as a Lady describes the Effects of the Spleen;

On Sleep intruding, dost thy Shadows spread,
Thy gloomy Terrors round the silent Bed,
And crowd with boding Dreams the melancholy Head.

However weak and silly it is to mind seriously our roving disorder'd Imaginations when asleep, yet if it once takes the Fancy, that Dreams are the foreboding Representations of coming Events, the Concern will be real, however fanciful the Occasion. Hard is the Fate of that Man, whose Miseries are multiplyed by that, which is the common Solace and Refuge of others Labours and Trouble! (*n*) "Sleep,

(*n*) *Perfugium videtur omnium laborum & solicitudinum esse somnus, at ex eo ipso plurima curæ metusque nascuntur,* Cic. de Divinat. l. 2. sect. 73.

"says

" says *Plutarch*, makes Slaves forget their Captivity, and the Fetter'd, their Irons; gives Intermission to every Trouble;

Dear Sleep, sweet Easer of my irksome Grief,
How pleasant art! how welcome thy Relief (o)!

" but Superstition won't allow a Man to enjoy thus much; but even Sleeping makes way for fresh Torments ".

If a Lady chances to fall into this Green-Sickness of the Mind, she must ask Leave of her Dreams the Night before, whether she may safely go to the Play the next Day; or whether she dare visit, or receive Company: whether she must not be confined to her House, and yet be forced at the same Time to be not at Home.

I have even heard of one that was content to go without an Husband, to whom she had no Objection, but that she dream'd, it rained all her Wedding-Day long; and so threatned an unpleasant Marry'd-State, according to the Learned in expounding Dreams. Who would have thought it possible, that a Man of Quality and Fortune, should have run into a rash Rebellion against the wisest and most powerful Prince of his Age? and yet it is credibly reported of *John Padilla*, that he rose in Rebellion against the Emperor *Charles* V. in the very Heart of *Spain*, because his Wife dreamed her Husband was made *Great Master* of the Order of St. *James* (p).

(o) Ὦ φίλον ὕπνε θελγητρον ἐπίκουρον νόσου
Ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσῆλθες, ἐν δέον τί γε.
Plut. de Superstit.

(p) Bail. Dict. *Art.* Padilla.

It's

It's impossible to enumerate the several Bugbears, whereby the cunning Managers of *Trade* have the Art to raise and sink the Market: So that Men are in Danger of having their Money spirited out of their Pockets, as well as being disturbed in their Heads by them. The refin'd Managements of *Exchange Alley* give us some new Instances every Day. The *Bulls* and the *Bears* of *Jonathan's* wage War with each other, principally by the Invention or dextrous Use of some Bugbears. Sometimes the *Bulls* have the Advantage, and Men are perswaded all Things go very right. The Peace of the North is as good as concluded, and the *Turks* are so fond of Peace, that they have agreed to all the Emperor's Demands. At other Times the *Bears* have the whip hand, and Men are frighted out of their Wits with the *Spanish* Preparations, and the Emperor must lose all he has in *Italy* in half a Campaign.

But to leave the *Change* and the Stock-Jobbers, to look into the *Academies*, we shall find *Bugbears* there too, by which Men have been scar'd from Truth, and as effectually led out of the way as by any *Ignis fatuus*. How often have the *Names* of great Men been used as a Charm to inslave the Mind, to pin down the Thoughts, and clap a *Ne plus ultra* to the Endeavours of any inquisitive Genius? Nor has this only been the case of the Ignorant and Vulgar, but sometimes of those to whom we willingly allow the Title of Learned and Wise. The several Heads of the different Sects among the Philosophers, the Sayings and Opinions of those by whom they were first instructed, and to whom they devoted themselves, were regarded as Oracles in their

respective Schools; and among their Followers, *Zeno*, and *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, were absolute Masters of their Philosophic Faith: None dared to contradict the *ipse dixit* of either of them, or vary from the *Dogma* of their Sect, or Opinion of their Leader, under the Penalty of publick Disgrace, and being accounted Hereticks in Philosophy. The Commentators upon *Aristotle* have had their several Admirers, and to a degree sometimes of Adoration. A famous Doctor and Head of an House in *Oxford*, made an open Declaration, in Sense, more barbarous than the Latin,

Non stat in aula mea, qui non stat pro Zaberella.

What a fright would this venerable Sage have been in, could any body then have stood up and told him, Sir, this same *Aristotle* whom you so adore shall be exploded; the Authority of the Philosopher shall sink into that of a mere Grammarian; and from the greatest Genius, become no more than a good Writer of Greek: And for that great Name, *Zaberella*, the Time will come when it shall be mentioned only in jest; and what you now call Learning, shall appear to be little more than a Cover to Ignorance; and as the mighty Names of Authority, that have hitherto born such Sway in the World, shall be submitted to the Evidence of Things.

The Principles of *Gassendus* and *Des Cartes* became as oracular in *Christendom*, as ever *Plato* and *Aristotle* were in *Greece*; and as generally follow'd, tho' not for so long a time: They and their Followers, such as *Regius*, *Le Grand*, *Rohault*,

Rohault, and *Malebranch*, were got into all the Schools of Learning in *Europe*; and so received, that some Followers of these Reformers in Philosophy, would hardly allow others the same Liberty to speculate for themselves. Many Things were taken upon Content, and on the mere Credit of their Leader, and maintained, not so much because they were true, as because they were necessary to the Hypothesis. Tho' it must be owned, the Modern Philosophy opened the Way to greater Freedom, and had many Things very ingenious and probable.

We have lived to see *Des Cartes* and his Followers discarded and forsaken almost every where. The learned World seem agreed to quit all *Hypothesis* and Conjecture, and turn to Facts and Experiments. The Honourable Mr. *Boyle* and Sir *Isaac Newton*, are the great Philosophic Oracles of the present Age; and tho' to be sure there is greater certainty in a Mathematical Demonstration, and a sensible Experiment, yet 'tis still a Question, whether the Power of great and admired Names does not, in some Instances, over-awe the Minds of Men, and over-rule a free Enquiry.

Not only the Names of Persons, but the *Names of Things* have been made Bugbears in Philosophy; the mere empty Sound of Words, without any determined Ideas belonging to them, or distinct Conceptions. How often has the Gibberish of *Occult Qualities*, and *Substantial Forms*, done the Business of Spells, and charm'd down the Objection, and forced the Opponent to make his Bow, and sit down? Men rose up in Arms against the ingenious Mr. *Pemble*, for his rational and convincing Con-

fustian of so absurd a Point in the reigning Philosophy, tho he ruined the Credit of them for ever. The infinite Number of *Metaphysical* Terms and School *Distinctions*, is a perfect *Fairy Land*. Some pinch, and give Uneasiness that is too real; while the Treasure that others seem to lay before you, is but Phantastick: And as for the Work they seem to rid, I can't better deliver my Thoughts of that, since I am upon Bugbears, than in that Quotation of the most memorable *John Hales*, out of *Agricola de Animantibus subterraneis*; "who reports of a "certain kind of Spirits, that converse in Mi-"nerals; they seem to busy themselves accord-"ing to all the Custom of Workmen; they will "dig, and cleanse, and melt, and sever the "Metals; but when they are gone, the Work-"men find nothing done.

The Difficulty of Things, and their Remoteness from Sense whenever it frights us from a due Enquiry and Entertainment of Truth, is a mere Bugbear. The Circulation of the Blood in the Human Body, the Annual and Diurnal Motion of the Earth, were formerly things as much star'd at, as strange and incredible, as the Doctrine of the Resurection to the *Athenian* Audience. To be a Mathematician, was the same thing with a Conjurer: Friar *Bacon*'s Brazen Head, was but a Symbolical way of representing the Courage of the Man, in putting a good Face upon the Boldness of daring at that Time, to understand any thing beyond his *Breviary*. When the Doctrine of the *Antipodes* was first started, the Orthodox of that Day fell to their Beads, and *Kyrie Eleison*'s, and were preparing to make the Discoverer a Sacrifice to their own Stupidity.

No

No Man can be a *Politician*, without a good Collection of *Bugbears* by him, of all kinds, and fit to be play'd off upon proper Occasions. By these the *Tarquinites* did once dissolve one of the best Parliaments; turn out a Ministry that had made their Queen and Country glorious; and almost procure an ever-victorious General to be stoned at Home, for having beat our Enemies Abroad. The *Bugbears* of *Forty One*, and *Danger of the Church*, *Anarchy and Confusion*, *Republican*, *Antimonarchical*; these saved *France*, frighted *England* out of its Credit and Trade, and almost into *Popery* and *Slavery*. These are now stale. Our Children are grown familiar with them: and if they don't get a Set of new ones against the next Election, they had e'en as good quit the Field. They seem a little sensible of it, and have been trying *some* of a new Sound; ——*The Danger of a standing Army*—— *The Expence of an Army in a Time of Peace*—— *The Liberty of the People, and Preservation of the Constitution*——*Soldiers*—— *Free Quarters*—— *Insulting the Magistrates*—— *Poor Innkeepers!* ——*Poultry*——*Eggs*——(p): But it happening, that they first shewed these at Noon-Day, and in broad Light, it abated the Terror; and so they lost their Effect, as soon as it was discerned, that the Question only was, which sort of standing Army we were to have, Occasional or Constant? The Bugbear was play'd withal, and the real Danger guarded against: it not being thought proper, at that Time, to give away the *Premises* to save Char-

Jacobites

Bugbears too notorious, to be dangerous with modesty.

These Bugbears are again conjured up by certain of our own politicians in this year, 1758: to serve the same causes, no doubt, as in our Author's time, in 1718.

(p) *Vide* Three Speeches, &c.

ges,

ges, or because two or three Old Women gave out, that the House was haunted.

Of all Political Bugbears, from the Time that first of all *Hannibal ad Portas* did operate upon the *Roman* common People; and after that *Venient Romani* upon the *Jews*; and so on, thro' the Terrors of *Zisca*, *Scanderbeg*, down to the *Protestant Plot*; from thence on to the *Screw-Plot*, of famous Memory, the *Inkhorn* and *Bandbox* Dangers, the *consuming Land-War*, the *Dangers from the* Austrian *Family growing great*, and of *bringing the* French *too low*: from the first of these, I say, to the last, there never was a *Political Bugbear* better timed, nor managed to better Effect, than that general Pannic that the People were struck with at the Revolution, upon the Report, that the *Irish were coming*. This was diffused most artificially: These *Irish* were every where, and every where ready to be opposed; and the whole Nation put into a Posture of Self-Defence, at a Time when it was making an Effort for its *own Salvation*. Upon the Advance of the *Prince's* Forces, *Maidenhead*-Bridge was fortify'd, and the Defence of it committed to the *Irish*; but some of the Drums beating a *Dutch* March in the Night, the Stratagem took so well, that the *Irish* abandoned their Post in Confusion, leaving their Cannon behind them.

N.B.

Of all the Bugbears that have been used to divert People from the right Use of their Reason, and the prudent Conduct of themselves, none have been so numerous or pernicious, as those which have obtained in all Ages, in the Affairs of *Religion*. Superstition has ever had its main Foundation and Support from them.

To

To these we owe the Heathen Gods and Goddesses, Oracles, Prophets, Nymphs, Satyrs, Fawns, Tritons, Furies, Dœmons. The Pagan *Theology* swarms with Bugbears; and the *Priests* so carefully managed them, that the People durst not speak, or act, contrary to what they would have.

Thus the Priests finish what the Nurse began,
And still the Child imposes on the Man.
Dryden.

Christianity was revealed from Heaven to introduce into the World a Spiritual and Reasonable Religion; founded upon Light and Evidence, and to be received only upon true and solid Motives: To cure Men of a Fondness for superstitious Sentiments and Customs, and assist their impartial Enquiries and Judgment about Truth and Duty. But, alas! the Designs of some, and the Weakness of others, soon sully'd the Lustre of the Religion of *JESUS*: and when Reason, and Scripture, could not be made to support the Corruptions which were brought in, other Ways were found necessary to supply the Place of them. People were to be obliged to receive, the Religion which was taught them, upon Trust; and must be deterr'd from an unbiass'd Examination, especially from any Profession contrary to the publick Standard, by such Considerations, as either had no Foundation of Truth, or were very unduly and improperly applied: And these I call *Ecclesiastical Bugbears.*

The Priests of the *Roman* Sect, when they had made Christianity to consist of such a Fardel

del of Contradictions, and such an Heap of ridiculous Observances, that a Man might sooner find in the *Alcoran*, than in the *New Testament*; they yet made a shift, for several Ages, to keep the poor People in an implicit Faith, and a blind Obedience, by the bold Assertion of *Infallibility*. This being once believed, and upon their Word too, you may take their Word afterward for every thing else: What Wonders have been done by that one Spell the *Authority of the Church*? It has served them, without Blushing, to raze out one of the *Ten Commandments* against Image-Worship; to remove one half of a *Sacrament*, and turn the remaining part into mere Mummery; to dispense with the Violation of the most essential Laws of Nature, for Money; to forbid what Christ has commanded, and to command what Christ has forbidden: and yet this one impudent Pretence satisfies the People, that all is done by the *Authority of the Church*; and, I will venture to say, will justify them with as good a Grace, if they went on, upon the same Pretence, to burn their Bibles, and blaspheme their Saviour. The Spiritual Power of the Pope has been an useful Engine to overthrow the Temporal Power of Princes, and to trample upon their Authority: And when these come to interfere, we have plainly seen which must give way. This has inabled them to depose Princes, when they stood in their way, to absolve their Subjects from their Allegiance, and make the Powers of the Earth but Tributaries to their own superior Sway. They are sensible the *Bible* stands in their way. They have given it so many hard Names, charged it with so much Obscurity,

Doubt-

Doubtfulness, and Danger, that they have persuaded the poor People to take *that* for a Bugbear too, and industriously to keep at a Distance from it. They terrify the People with their *Exorcisms*, Doctrines of Dœmons, the pretended Appearances of Saints and Angels, as Vouchers for them. How many miserable Souls in Purgatory have been brought up to call for Aid of the Peoples *Pockets*, and the Church's *Prayers!* These Holy Cheats have been the Foundations and Supports of most of the *Religious Orders*; and there is scarce a peculiar Doctrine or Superstition among them, which they have not, at one Time or other, made use of some of these Tricks to support, in the Opinion of the credulous Vulgar, who are more influenced by them, than by all the Miracles in the Gospel.

It were endless to reckon up all the vain Terrors, which are kept up in that false Image of the Christian Church, to retain the People in the Fetters of the Priesthood, and induce them to believe, and do, just as they please; while they are Masters of their Secrets by *Confession*, and make them believe it in their Power to exclude them from Heaven by *Excommunication*, or secure them a safe Passage to it by *Absolution*. They have in truth nothing else but Bugbears to support any one of their Additions to the Christian Religion, excepting only what has too much of Reality to bear that Name, *viz.* the Assistance of the *secular* Arm, to keep all quiet where-ever they have Power. B. N.

The *Reformation* had one and the same End with Christianity at first; to bring Men back to Christ's own Religion, upon the proper and just

Motives upon which he has recommended it; and to discharge them from all the *vain Terrors* by which the Church of *Rome* had supported her Corruptions. But in truth, most established Churches soon learned to lisp after her: either to revive the same *Cant-Terms* in their own Favour, which they had ridiculed in her; or to start new ones, which would be as effectual to keep the People within their Circle. *Heresy* and *Schism* have been observed long ago by the great Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton*, to have been used among us as *Theological Scarecrows*. *Church-Power* has been screwed up to a mighty Height, and Submission to it enjoyned even in some Protestant Countries, on no less than the Pain of Damnation. Peaceable Separation from established Forms, in Things confessedly left indifferent by the Gospel, are made equally criminal with Murder and Adultery. People have been pressed with the Decisions of *Convocations*, the Opinions, or rather Votes, of Majorities; the Judgment of Antiquity, the Authority of celebrated Names, about Matters which concern the Religion of Jesus Christ, where there cannot possibly be concluding Arguments, and therefore are but *Bugbears*, as they are applied. The very Word *Church*, as it has been made use of to the same purpose, is a *Bugbear* Word. It would spoil all to let us know what was meant by that Word: For, sometimes, and in some Places, it is the *Pope* and his Cardinals; sometimes it is the *Clergy* and their Interest; sometimes it signifies the *Ministers* got together in a Body; sometimes it is a *Great Man* that is in Danger of losing a Place, or wants to get into one; sometimes it signifies those People who,

never

never come to Church, and is used in Opposition to them that do; and sometimes, but very seldom, it stands for the *Body of the Faithful*: And yet by this one Word *Church*, we have seen a Faction go on to fright Women and Children out of the Establishment into their own *Peculium*; by a bold Claim of the *Church* to themselves; by the ridiculous Bugbears of *Uninterrupted Succession*, *Sacerdotal Powers*, *Authoritative Absolution* and *Benedictions*, and such like big Words, and *Human Terrors*; (as they will now, I believe, be called to the End of the World;) as if all Christianity depended upon those Things, which it says nothing of. The odious *Names* of Distinction, which Men invent for those who differ from them, shall be sufficient to strike their servile Followers with Horror for the People on whom they are fasten'd; tho' not one in an hundred knows the Meaning of the Term, and very often the Persons so marked, differ widely from him who gave Original to the Name; as *Arminius*, *Calvin*, *Luther*, &c. these also are mere Bugbears, to fright People out of their Reason, Consideration, and Charity.

N. B. The Church of the Non-jurors, the spawn of Mr Leslie, Dr Hickes, and others is particularly meant here.

We cannot do a greater Injury to Religion, than by giving Countenance to any such wrong Measures and Motives of Practice: It entirely debases an Action, tho' never so good in it self, and separates all true and acceptable Religion from it: It is not Religion, but Superstition, to believe as the Church believes, or act as the Church dictates, *merely* for that Reason; or to be of the Mind of *Cranmer*, or *Ridly*, or *Luther*, or *Calvin*, out of an obsequious Regard to them: He alone is a good Christian, who carefully and im-

The doctrines here delivered are indisputably true; the, if fear, [illegible] received.

n. b.

impartially searches after, and sincerely embraces, what he takes to be the Mind of Christ? And indeed, to lay the Stress of Assent or Compliance any where else, is liable to this further great Mischief, That when the *Bugbear* or Artifice comes to be discerned, Men are apt, in Resentment of the Tricks put upon them, to fly off into the opposite Extreme; and this has made Atheism *almost* of equal Extent with *Priestcraft*, in the Popish Countries. The same Inquisition that stops the Mouth, multiplies the *Freethinkers* of the worst sort, in *Italy* and *Spain*. And if our High-Clergy had proceeded in the Strain which they so much affected of late, I doubt we should have found that sort of People far from being diminished at Home.

N. B. This whole representation is worthy of a wise man, and a sincere christian.

Ut Religio propagauda etiam——sic superstitionis stirpes omnes ejicienda. Cic. de Divinat. l. 2.

FINIS.

THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. III.

CONTAINING

TWO LETTERS.

ONE,

To the Reverend Dr. *Prideaux*, occasioned by some *Considerations* which he has offered to the *Dissenters*, in his 1st Volume of the *History of the Old and New Testament connected in the History of the* Jews *and neighbouring Nations.*

ANOTHER,

To the Author of this Paper, in relation to a Passage in the *Doctor*'s Preface to the IId Volume of *his History.*

LONDON:

Printed for J. KNAPTON, at the *Crown* in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard; EM. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*; J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*; J. HARRISON, under the *Royal Exchange*; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*. MDCCXVIII.

(Price Sixpence.)

LETTERS.

THE *First* of the following Papers I receiv'd lately, with a very civil Letter from the Author, desiring me, if I thought it proper, to allow it a Place in the *Occasional Paper*, and to convey it that way into the Hands of the Learned Doctor to whom it is directed. The Nature of the Argument at first Thought occasion'd some Demur. But the very decent Manner of managing the Debate, has determin'd me to comply with my Correspondent's Request. I reckon I should shew my self a Bigot and a Party-man, which I would ever avoid, if I should refuse to let other Mens Thoughts come abroad in this Collection, tho' they should happen not to agree with my own; as long as the Rules of good Manners and Christian Charity are carefully observ'd. Free and calm Debates of the several Differences among Christians, appear to me the most effectual way to serve the Cause of Truth, Liberty, and Catholick Christianity, the avowed and constant Design of this Paper. And therefore, as I

now

now propose this Gentleman's Sentiments on one side to the World, so if any one will please to honour me with his Thoughts on the other, with such an exemplary regard to the Decorum of Character and a Christian Temper, he shall readily find a Place in an ensuing Paper. I publish this the more readily, that I may have an Opportunity along with it to send the Reverend Doctor my hearty Thanks for his uncommon Services to the Christian World and to the Advancement of Scripture-Knowledge. Having newly receiv'd a Letter myself upon an Argument near akin to the former; tho' it enters into the Debate of another Passage of the Doctor's, I have annexed it, for the same Reasons which induced me to publish the other. I have several other Letters by me, some of which I intend shall come abroad in my next Paper.

A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Prideaux, &c.

Reverend Sir,

IT is Impossible for me to say with how much Pleasure I have read that incomparable Performance of yours, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the* Jews *and neighbouring Nations*; which is capable of serving a great many noble Purposes at once. There is both Instruction and Entertainment going along with it, of several Sorts. And it is particularly Useful to clear up the prophetical Parts of Scripture; upon which Account I value it extreamly, and am one among the many that return you Thanks for it; and thank God, who enabled you under so much Weakness and Pain to go thro' so Laborious a Piece of Service. May that Life be continued, that is so well employ'd; and those Labours succeeded, that are so well

well adapted as well as design'd to do Good; and those Weaknesses and Infirmities be remov'd, or at least kept under, that would incommode you in such Services or in any other. Your Book, *Sir*, is a Master-piece of the kind, and may serve both to correct the Errors of those that have gone before you, and to direct the Steps of those that come after you. And I am confident nothing but Ignorance and Envy can treat it ill. But I must not attempt to draw its Character; I'll leave that to others. Only let me say it needs none, and will bear the best. And I only wish you had taken your Rise higher, and carry'd down your History lower.

And now after this Account, I can't tell how, methinks, to except against any thing in it. But I find my self oblig'd to do so, or otherwise Truth is like to suffer, and a considerable Body of Men, valuable for every thing that is valuable, will lie under an *Odium* that they by no means deserve. I hope then you will excuse my Freedom in it, since I can assure you, I design no disrespect to you, nor any injury to the Reputation of your Book, which indeed nothing that I could say can lessen. I value both the *Author*, and the *Performance*, even tho' it bears so hard, in one or two particular Places, upon the Cause and Character of those to whom I am firmly attached: And I would only do Justice to a good Cause and its Advocates, while I am doing you no harm.

The Passages I have to consider, lie in *Vol.* I. *p.* 374, 375, 378, 379. and the Substance of them (for I must not transcribe them, till I come to consider them particularly,) may be brought within a very narrow Compass. You tell us that *the Jews made use of a Liturgy in the Worship of God in their Synagogues in our Saviour's Time, and that our Saviour joined with them therein, when he went into their Synagogues, as he did every Sabbath-Day; from whence you in-*

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for two things for the Consideration of Dissenters, viz. *that he did not dislike Set Forms of Prayer, in publick Worship; and he was contented to join with the Publick in the meanest Forms, rather than separate from it: For such you say those were that were then made use of, in Comparison of those of the Church of* England. *And to make that appear you have set down their Eighteen Prayers that were of most account with them, most of which, if not all the* 18, *you say, were used in our Saviour's Time. And after that you tell us, that this may satisfy the Dissenters, if any thing can satisfy Men so perversely bent after their own Ways, that neither your using Set Forms of Prayer in your publick Worship, nor your using such which they think not sufficiently Edifying, can be Objections sufficient to justify them in their Refusal to join with you in them. For they have the Example of Christ in both these thus directly against them.*

This looks pretty plausible, and passes, I doubt not, for Demonstration with some; but it is no more than Colour and Paint, and there is nothing Solid and Substantial in it: As I shall make appear by considering every particular Passage, wherein all this is contained, after having observed two things in the general.

The First is this, that there are no Persons, that I know of, who pay more respect to the Example of the Blessed Jesus, whether *in Principle* or *Practice*, than the *Dissenters* do: And if in any thing they differ from it, it is merely thro' *Involuntary Ignorance.* For you then to suppose them, especially in the general (as you do) *so perversely bent upon their own ways* that nothing *can satisfy them*, is what one would not have expected from Dr. *Prideaux.* We are mightily *concerned*, as well as *surprized*, that so Great and Good an Author should run into the Virulence of Ignorant, Rash and Loose Scribblers against a Body of Men, who have given all possible Proofs of their Sincerity and Openness to Conviction; having never passed by

any

any thing of Moment that has been offered to them, from whatever Hand it has come; and who must be the greatest Fools in Nature to be *perverse*, having so many *sensible Arguments* to make them willing to be convinced. *Weak* they may be, and they could have bore that Charge well enough from you. But to go down to the latest Posterity in such a Performance as yours with the Character of *Perverseness*, is somewhat too grating to be passed by in Silence. And especially when there was so little Occasion for it from any thing that you had said to *satisfy* them; as I shall make appear presently. Pardon me therefore, *Sir*, if I take Notice of it with some Concern: And I am sure you will do it, if you will but make the Case your own.

But to say no more of that, for fear of saying too much, I observe,

2. What is very necessary to be observed here, that you have quite mistaken the Dissenters, when you suppose that nothing hinders them from joining with the publick Establishment besides *your using Set Forms*, and *your using those that are Mean*. For as for the First, *the use of Set Forms*, though there may indeed here and there be one among them that scruples the very Lawfulness of them, yet the Generality are of quite another Opinion: As you will find, if you do but consult K. *Charles* IId's *Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs* quickly after the *Restoration*, or the *Conference at the Savoy*, or any other particular Writer of Note among them. They are all of them indeed against *Set Forms* in Opposition to *Free Prayer*, or exclusive of it. But they allow them in the general to be *Lawful*, and upon some Occasions *Expedient*. They very well approve of a *Liturgy* in the general, especially under some particular Circumstances, and with regard to some particular Persons, who can't do well without it, and therefore have no dispute with the Church of *England* upon

upon that Head. Nay, they would conform to the establish'd *Liturgy* in particular, if those *Amendments* were made in it which they cannot but judge necessary; and provided they were not *entirely confined to it, so as never to vary from it in their Ministrations upon any Occasion whatsoever*; and not obliged so to *subscribe* to it and *declare* concerning it as they are. So that we have no Controversy with you about *Set Forms* in the general, but about those particular Forms of yours; which, in our Opinion, carry with them some *Disagreeable*, *Disputable*, and *Dangerous Circumstances*. We do indeed give our Way of Praying, in the general, the Preference, before your's; (our Reasons for which we have often laid before the World, and I shall have occasion to mention some of them by and by;) But we are far from being Enemies to *Set Forms*, especially such as are pertinent, judicious, well composed, and regularly put together. We know that our way of praying is no more expresly commanded, than your's is forbid; and therefore tho' we think the former the more eligible, yet we don't at the same time condemn the later as sinful. In short, the Case stands thus, we apprehend that neither way of praying, whether with or without *Set Forms*, is expresly commanded or expresly forbidden; and therefore think, that we ought not to be bound up either way by any Humane Authority, whether *Civil* or Ecclesiastical, or both; but that a Man is oblig'd to take that way, which he finds best for himself, can give the best Reasons for, and which he is like to meet with the fewest Inconveniencies from. On these accounts we are determined on the side of *Free Prayer*, before that of *Set Forms*, tho' with a favourable Opinion of *Set Forms*, and a good Disposition to them, at the same time. Of which we are willing to give the *Ch.* of *E.* a convincing Instance at any time, by going over to her in a Body, whenever she will be pleased

sed to set things upon the Foot, that not only we, but also some of her wisest and best Members have long wished and prayed and contended for: And which would mightily tend to her own Reputation, Advancement and Security; as Dr. *Wake* (then B. of *Lincoln*, now A. B. of *Canterbury*) has sufficiently made appear in that admirable Speech of his in the H. of L. at the time of Dr. *Sacheverel*'s Trial. And I could heartily wish we had another from him of the same strain now, which in all probability would do more good, his Interest and Influence being so much increased by his Preferment to the *Archiepiscopal Sea*.

And as for the *Second*, *the Meanness of your Set Forms*, tho' that is one thing which the Dissenters object against Conformity, yet that is *but* one Thing, and not the main thing neither. We object most against the *Restraints* and *Impositions* that go along with them, and the *Subscription* and *Declaration* that are required of us in order to our joining in them. And I desire this may be taken notice of, because of the use that I shall make of it in the process of this Debate.

These Things being premised, let us see now what you have to say to us. And, First, you tell us that the Jews *had Liturgies, in which were all the prescribed Forms of their Synagogue-Worship*. Now tho' you don't particularly apply this to the Dissenters, yet I can't but think it is your design that they should apply it to themselves, and others at least may apply it to them, and have done * so, and therefore I shall take it in my way and consider it a little.

And here I allow you the Fact to be true, and that they had a *Liturgy* too from the time of *Ezra*, tho' none before, as *Vitringa* observes out of *Mai-*

* *Vid.* Bennett's *Brief History*, &c.

 monides

monides, Lib. 3. Cap. 14. p. 1032. But I can't see what use can be made of this in the Controversy between you and us. It will by no means serve your Cause, or injure ours. For this is not sufficient Proof for so much as Conformity to a Liturgy, in general, in Case we scrupled that, as we do not; and much less is here any Proof for Conformity to your Liturgy in particular.

1. Here is no sufficient Proof for so much as Conformity to a Liturgy in the general; so that in Case we scrupled that, as we do not, this could not reconcile us to it; and that not thro' any *Perverseness* of our's, but for want of sufficient Force in the Argument it self. For pray, Sir, where is the Force of this Argument, They had a Liturgy and conformed to it, and therefore we must have one and conform to it too? Must we have, and do, every thing that they had and did; as upon this way of arguing we must? No certainly. For then we must have Sacrifices too, and abundance of other Things which it is needless to mention. We can be no farther bound to imitate them, than as the Reason and Nature of things, and Agreement in Circumstances, and the like, requires. We must therefore be determined in this Point, not meerly by their having a Liturgy and their Conformity to it, but by considering the Reasons upon which they went. And if they will not hold in our Case, as I am inclined to think they will not, because we certainly stand upon quite another Foot than they did, as having more Advantages and better Helps for another way of praying than they had, we are still but where we were, and our Nonconformity to a Liturgy may still for any thing in this Argument be as defensible as ever.

And much less 2. Is here any Argument for Conformity to *your* Liturgy in particular; no more than it would be to the *Romish* one, or to any other.

ther. The Argument must run thus, the *Jews* conformed to *one*, therefore we should conform *to this*. And any other Liturgy, let it be Good or Bad, would step in with the very same Pretence. Now an Argument that will equally serve for all Liturgies, will serve for none. But not to insist upon this, the Question here is, whether the *Jewish* Liturgy was the same with your's? If not, we are still safe in not conforming to your's; even supposing that we are obliged to follow the *Jews* Example, which really is not the Case. In order therefore to make so much as a plausible Argument of it, you must prove that the *Jews* conformed to such a *Liturgy* as your's, for *Matter*, *Method* and *Expression*; and that it was used in the same way, both by Clergy and Laity, with the same *Ceremonies* and *Gestures*; and that it was attended with the same Circumstances, *viz. that it was drawn up by Men uninspired*, that *there was no manner of Liberty allowed to vary from it, or add to it, upon any Occasion whatsoever*, and that *there went such a Subscription and Declaration along with it as there does with your's*. Unless you can do all this, we are still but where we were, and their Example can no ways determine us in this Controversy. And how you will do this, I can't conceive. If *Vitringa* your Favourite Author, and others, have given a true Account of their *Liturgies*, nothing in the World could be more different from them, in all the main disputed Circumstances, than your's is: As I could easily prove, if there were any Occasion for it, and will do it whenever there is so. And indeed if their Example is to determine us in this Case, we are to go throughout with it, and not only to use a *Liturgy*, but *their's* too, or at least one as like it as may be; for so far as we differ from them, so far we run from their Example, and therefore, upon this Principle, are so far in the wrong. The Dissenters then are still safe in not

conforming to the *Liturgy* of the *Ch. of E.*; and that upon this very Principle on which they are urged to it, because they don't run farther from the Example of the *Jews* in not conforming to the *English* Liturgy, than the Churchmen themselves do in conforming to it, when this is so very different from that of the *Jews*.

But if you could shew your Liturgy to be like Theirs, it would still lie upon you to shew that the Principles upon which they went in their Conformity to their *Liturgy*, are such as we not only *may* but *ought* to act upon. Otherwise if their Principles will not suit our Case, we may still refuse to act as they did, even tho' their *Liturgy* and yours should be found to be the very same in every Circumstance that we dispute about.

But to come to somewhat more Material, even our Saviour's Conformity to the Liturgy then in use. Your Words are these. *The most solemn Part of their Prayers are those, which they call* Shemoney Eshreh, *i. e.* the Eighteen Prayers. *These they say were composed and instituted* by *Ezra* and the great Synagogue; *and to them* Rabbi Gamaliel, *a little before the Destruction of* Jerusalem, *added the* 19*th against the* Christians, *who are therein meant under the Name of* Apostates *and* Hereticks. *It is certain these Prayers are very ancient. For mention is made of them in the* Mishna *as old settled Forms; and no doubt is to be made but that they were used in our Saviour's time; at least most of them, if not all the* 18; *and consequently that he joined in them with the rest of the* Jews, *whenever he went into their Synagogues, as he always did every Sabbath-day. And from hence two things may be inferred for the Consideration of our* Dissenters. *1st, that our Saviour disliked not Set Forms of Prayer in publick Worship. And 2dly, that he was contented to join with the Publick in the meanest Forms, rather than separate from it. For those* 18 *Prayers, in comparison of those now used in our Church,*

Church, are very jejune and empty Forms. And that the Reader may see that they are so, I shall here add a Translation of them in the same Order as they are in the Jewish *Liturgies, adding the 19th Prayer to them, which according to the same Order is the 12th in Number, as here recited.* Then follow the Prayers you speak of, which I need not transcribe.

Now here I will allow that *most of these Prayers*, tho' *not all of them*, were so *ancient* as you represent them to be, † and that they were used *in the Synagogues in our Saviour's time*. But I can't allow your *Consequence* from thence, *viz. that he joined in them with the rest of the* Jews, *whenever he went into their Synagogues, as he always did every Sabbath-day*. Supposing the Fact to be true, *that he did join with the* Jews *in them, whenever he went into their Synagogues*, which yet to me is *very Suspicious*, that does by no means follow as a necessary Consequence from their being used then and there; Because it is possible he might not go into their *Synagogues*, till after they were over. And his Chief Design, as I take it, in going thither, being not so much to *worship* with them, as to improve an Opportunity of *teaching* and *preaching* among them; this is by no means inconceivable. For this he might do after that Service was over, tho' not before. And this is the more Conceivable, because, as I shall shew presently, he could not, in all probability, *join in them*, at least in some of them, consistently with his Character and Circumstances; and then it must appear most likely that he would avoid being present at those Prayers, wherein it is probable he could *not join*.

But let us enquire a little more distinctly, whether the Fact be true, which you lay down so po-

† *Vid.* Vitringa, *de Synag. Veter. Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 14. *p.* 1046.

sitively,

sitively, as if no doubt were to be made of it, and which you make the Ground-work of all your after Reasoning.

Now by Christ's *joining in the* Jewish Prayers, I suppose you mean *making them his own*, and *putting up the several Petitions along with them*, as they did: For his being *present at them*, if that were granted, or any thing less than *his making use of them himself, and worshipping God by them*, as they did; will not be sufficient to answer your Purpose. But that he did this, is so far from being *certain* to me; that the contrary seems far more *probable*. It is certain, that he could not join in them *all* on the *Sabbath-Days* whatever he might do on other Days, because they were not *all* used then. For *Vitringa*, if I take him right, says so *. Now it is certain he could not *join in any* more than were used; which were, according to him, only the *three First*, and the *three Last*, and one that goes under the Name of *Benedictio Media*, which seems to me to be the same with what he elsewhere calls *Benedictio Modim*. Vid. Cap. 17. p. 1086. Lib. 3. And for this he quotes *Maimonides*'s own Words. and there is some room to doubt whether he ever *joined in these* Seven, at least in some of them, or in the most significant and material Passages of them. I desire any one to look them over, and he will easily see several things in them, which seem not consistent with Christ's Character and Circumstances, in the Sense in which the *Jews* intended them. It sounds harsh, for Instance, *that he should bless God for sending a Redeemer to the Jews*, and that *he should call God his Saviour*, as he must do in the use of the *First Form*:

* Octodenæ integre non recitabantur Sabbathis & Diebus Festis, sed illis diebus Septem tantum recitabantur Eulogiæ. *Vitringa. Lib. 3. p. 1042.*

And

And that he, who was against needless Repetitions, should bless God *four times* for *raising the Dead*, as he must do in the Use of the *Second*, and a fifth time, if he used the Doxology at the Conclusion, as the *People* did after the *Legatus Ecclesiæ* had gone through the Form. I can hardly think, that he would use the *Third*, as it was enlarged when used by the *Legatus Ecclesiæ:* (For it was much larger then, than it is here in your Specimen; which gives it us as it was used by every private Person, not as it was used in the Congregation by the Person that officiated.) In the enlarged Form there is this Passage——*O our King, shew thy self Glorious out of thy Place, and Reign over us as we expect thee. When wilt thou reign in* Sion *in our Life and Days! Thou wilt dwell, and shalt be sanctified and magnified in the midst of* Jerusalem *thy City, in all Generations and to all Eternity.* But could the Blessed Jesus say so? And so for *Form the* 17*th*——*restore thy Worship to the inner Part of thy House,*——*reduc Ministerium Leviticum in adytum Domus tuæ.* Vitringa, p. 1037. Or,——*let us see thee, moved with pity, returning to thy City* Sion. *Blessed art thou, O Lord, who art about to restore thy presence to* Sion; as *De Veil* has it, and *elegantly* says *Vitringa. Ibid.* The two following *Forms*, which praise God for his Mercies, run in a strain that intimate a *Forfeiture* and *Unworthiness* of them, and a vast Obligation to Divine Grace arising from that Consideration: Whereas he was not chargeable with any such thing; and therefore if he did use them, it must have been in a different Sense and Way from what thy did. As for the *Benedictio Media* indeed, I have not been able to meet with it in *Vitringa*, and therefore can't say whether he might not *use that.* I leave the Reader now to judge about his *joining* in these Forms, as he shall think best: I dare not assert positively that he could not, and did not, join in them. But it seems

seems very probable to me that he did not. And this I am sure of that he might very well *fulfil all the Righteousness* of that *Law, under which he was born*, without it: So that there was no absolute Necessity of his doing it, in order to acquit himself in that particular; which yet is all that can possibly be said of his Obligation to do so.

If we take in the rest of these 18 Forms, it will be still more Improbable, that ever our Blessed Lord should join in them; for either *they are proper for none but sinful and guilty Creatures*; of which Number he was not; or *they speak of a Saviour to come*, or have some other Circumstance attending them, which renders it very Improbable that he should ever make use of them, as any one will see who consults them.

The Evangelical History is wholly silent upon this Head: It does not speak one Word of his joining in their Prayers in the Synagogues. It tells us indeed of his going thither very frequently, and mentions several things which he did there, as *reading, interpreting, teaching, preaching*, and *working Miracles*, but says not one Word of his *praying with them* there. And tho' I would not press this Argument too far, yet give me leave to say, that it seems to me an unaccountable Silence, in Case he did *join* with the *Jews* in their Prayers; and especially if (as you must suppose to make any thing of your Argument from it,) he designed thereby to set After-Ages an Example of *joining in Set Forms* in the Worship of God. It is true, his History does not say that he did not *join in the* Jewish Forms, any more than that he did. But certainly the matter would not have been left dubious, but plainly related; at least the Probabilities would not have been greater against his joining in them, if he had designed to lead us by his Example to join in such Forms.

To

To conclude this Head, if he did join in them, I would ask, Whether he did it in their Way too? Which is to me a very material Question to be answered, In order to put an end to the Controversy between you and us. And here to omit other Circumstances, that went along with the use of these Prayers, (as the *going three Steps back*, and *bowing five times very low*, viz. at the *Beginning* and *End* of the *First Benediction*, at the *Beginning* and *End* of the *Benedictio Media*, and at the *Conclusion* of all. *Vitringa, p.* 1086.) let me ask only, whether *he said them ever privately to himself, before they were said publickly* by the *Legatus Ecclesiæ*, or the Person that officiated in the reciting of them? It can hardly be supposed that he should, since it was altogether *needless*, and withal *superstitious*. If he did not, what becomes of his Conformity, or how can it be urg'd upon us? He conformed but in part at most to the Matter, and not at all to the Manner: Such Conformity our Churchmen, I believe, would not be satisfy'd with from us. He used them, say you; but it was not in their way; what is this then to us who are to use your Forms in your way exactly, or else not at all?

And now, if our Saviour did not conform to the *Jewish* Liturgy, as it is very probable he did not; the Dissenters will have all the Advantage of his Example on their Side, which you pretend to lie on your's; and we can turn this Argument against you, as you have done against us: And if we were dispos'd to triumph, could do it here with as good a Grace as ever you have done.

Thus much for the Ground-work of your Reasoning with us; which being render'd precarious, at least, the *Considerations* you infer from it would not need to be examined, till that is better supported. But, however, to shew how good a Cause we have, I will give you that which indeed you have

no right to; and suppose, for Argument sake, *that the blessed* Jesus *did join with the* Jews *in their Liturgy*; and proceed to examine the two *Inferences* you draw from it, *for the Consideration of the Dissenters.*

The *First* is this, *That our Saviour disliked not Set Forms of Prayer in Publick Worship.* But what this signifies to us, I can't see. For we don't *dislike* them neither, any farther than he; but are perfectly of the same Mind with him, as far as we can judge, in this particular. And I am glad for your own Sake, as well as ours, that you have express'd your self with so much Caution and Prudence here. You only say, that he *disliked* not Set Forms, not that he *approved of them intirely*, or that *they were his Choice*, as some have inferred from your very *Premises*. But it was certainly more than they had Reason for. For suppose that he *joined in* the use of Set Forms, all that can follow from thence by any necessary Consequence, is, that he did not think Set Forms *Unlawful*, or at that time *Inexpedient*; not that he was *fond of them*, or *preferred them to our way of Praying*, by any Means. For if his actual *joining in Set Forms* showed his intire Approbation of them, in Opposition to our way of Praying; then his actual *joining in* those *mean Forms*, as you call them, must show his intire Approbation of *mean ones* too, and that in opposition to Forms drawn up with more Judgment and Care.

But to apply this to the purpose to which it is intended. If you design here to reconcile the Dissenters to the use of Set Forms as *Lawful*, and sometimes *Expedient*, it is needless; if you design to reconcile them to the use of Set Forms as *Preferable* to that of *Free Prayer*, this Argument from the supposed Practice of our Lord will not serve his Purpose. For he *disliked* not our way of Prayer neither, as I shall make to appear presently by his Use of it. And therefore this is no Reason to quit our way of

of praying for that: Because it stands upon the same foot with that, in respect of Christ's Example, whatever it may do upon other Accounts.

But to leave your First Inference, which concerns only Forms in General, about the Lawfulness or Expediency of which, in some Cases, we have no dispute with you; I proceed to your

Second Inference, which is this, *That he was contented to join with the Publick in the Meanest Forms, rather than separate from it. For those* 18 *Forms, in comparison of those now used in our Church, are very Jejune and Empty Forms.* And to prove this, you exhibit a Copy of them. Now the Design of this, is to let us see, that the *Meanness* of any particular Forms is no sufficient Objection against Conformity to them, but that Persons ought *to be contented to join with the Publick in such, rather than separate from it.* I say, that they *ought* to be so, not only that they *may* be so. For otherwise it will not serve your Purpose. Which is to reconcile the Dissenters to the *Church Forms*, even tho' they take them to be *mean ones*. Now to this I have the following Things to reply:

1. It does not appear that those Set Forms which the blessed Jesus *joined with the Publick in*, were so *Mean* as you represent them to be. Not those 18 particularly. And if we may judge of the rest by them, I can't but think they were far from despicable, especially at that time of Day. And I cannot but say with *Vitringa* * ——*dignam (Liturgiam Judaicam* scil.) *quæ a Christianis cognoscatur; quorum plurimi utinam Sacra non multo tepidiùs & negligentiùs tractarent quam Judæi.* And I find him displeased with *Buxtorf*, for ridiculing some others of their Forms as Mean

* *Tom.* 2. *Cap.* 17. *ad fin.*

as these †, so much as he has done. That they were *Jejune* and *Empty* indeed in Comparison of what our Saviour could have composed himself, I readily allow: And that they were so too in Comparison of what the Forms of the Ch. of *E.* might be brought to. But that they are so in Comparison of what the *English* Forms are at present, I must beg leave to dissent; tho' I would not allow my self to disparage the Church Forms, out of *Conscience* as well as *Prudence*.

But 2. Supposing them to have been so *Mean* as you represent them, and that the blessed Jesus *was content to join with the Publick in them* notwithstanding, *rather than separate*, this can be no sufficient Argument for us to *join with the Publick* in those that we think so, because such Forms would hinder our Edification more than they could his, who needed no such Helps for Edification as we do; and because they are more unsuitable to the Dispensation under which we live, than those were to that under which he lived. And this Alteration of Circumstances makes a vast difference between his Case and ours.

3. It is here supposed, that our Lord was afraid of *Separation*, that he apprehended it to be bad, and therefore that it was better for him to submit to some Inconveniences than to run into it, and that upon this Principle he was *contented to join in the Publick in the Meanest Forms*. But how does all this appear? What Foundation is there for it? It is all *gratis dictum*, and ought to be made out before it can affect us.

But

† Videmus, quam sanctè & decorè secundum Instituta Veterum Sacra Synagogarum exercita sunt; quæ proin' nullam merentur Irrisionem aut Contemptum, cui illa sæpe exponit *Cl. Buxtorfius*, ceteroquin per Synagogam suam de Ecclesia Meritissimus, sed potius attentè a nobis considerari. *p.* 963.

But to close all, 4. It is here supposed, that our Lord did not *separate from the Publick*, no *not at all*, not so much as *Occasionally*; which is what I see no Reason to grant. The contrary rather appears to me, both *during his Ministry*, and *after his Resurrection*, especially *after his Resurrection*. 1. *During his Ministry*. That in this Period of Time he held *separate Assemblies* from the Publick, and that frequently, at least on the Week Days, is to me very probable. That he *preached* to the Multitude, among whom he wrought Miracles, is undeniable; and tho' it will not follow from thence only, that he *prayed* with them too, yet it will, I think, from other Circumstances. We read sometimes of his praying at the working of a Miracle; it is probable therefore he might do it at the preaching of a Sermon too. And with regard to his *Disciples* particularly, I think there is little Reason to doubt, that he held *separate Assemblies* with them, what ever he did with others. That *Prayer* of his on the *Mount of Transfiguration* was at a *separate Assembly* of himself and three of his Disciples. That mentioned *Luke* xi. 1. is in all appearance a *Social Prayer* with his *Disciples*. I gather this from their asking him to *teach them to pray* immediately after it was over. I allow indeed that this is no *certain* Argument that it was so, but it is a *probable* one, and that is all that I bring it for.

And give me leave here to say, That upon such Occasions it is likely he used the same way of praying as we do, not as you do. For if he did not, he must either use the *Jewish Forms*, or *some of his own composing*. But that he used the *Jewish Forms* is very unlikely, because they could not be pertinent on such Occasions, at least not always, or so much as in the general; and it is not likely he should ever use any that were not pertinent. And that he should *compose Forms for them himself* too is very unlikely;

likely: We have not the least Evidence for it, or the least Hint or Intimation about it, or any one Passage in all his History from whence it may be inferred. This is certain, that there was no necessity that he should do so, either upon his own Account, or upon the Account of those that joined with him. As he was so full of the Holy Ghost, there was no necessity of his using *Set Forms* for an help to himself; and as he had so happy a Talent this way, there was no necessity of his using *Set Forms* for the sake of those that joined with him; for he could keep up their Devotion without them, whatever we may do. Nay, I think we have some Evidence to the contrary, from his Disciples asking him to teach them to pray, after he had done praying, and his answering their Request: Neither of which had been necessary, had he made use of Forms among them. For they must have been acquainted with them without doubt, by having heard them frequently; and therefore needed not to have made such a Request; for could they ever suppose to pray in better Words and Forms than those which they knew him to make use of himself? Their Request would thereupon have been needless; and as such he would have returned no Answer to it at all, much less such a one as he did: For he needed but to have referred them to his own Liturgy, which they knew him to make use of, and that would have answered their Design effectually: But whether he prayed *with* a Form or *without* one in these *separate Assemblies* of his *during his Ministry*, I will not dispute at present. It is the Fact it self, that *separate Assemblies* were held by him with them during that time for Religious Worship, in which *Prayer* came in as a part, that I am now upon, and that I can't easily give up. And then 2. That *after his Resurrection* he held *separate Assemblies* with his *Disciples*, for Religious Worship, in which *Prayer* came

came in for a part, is what I think cannot well be disputed. We have not the least Hint, that during this Interval he ever enter'd into the *Jewish* Synagogues at all; and yet he was frequently with his Disciples. And can we think there was no *Religious Worship* at these Meetings and Intercourses between him and them? Or that *Prayer* was not a part thereof? Or that he prayed by the *Jewish Forms*, or *any Set Forms of his own composing*? The *Jewish Forms* could never be proper, when a new Dispensation was setting up. And *Set Forms of his own composing* would surely have been preserved by them for their own Use after his Departure; or they would have taken the same way themselves, which I shall show presently it is probable they did not. And let me observe, that it is here, if any where, that we are to look for the Example of Christ for our Direction in the Business of Prayer, as well as other Things, when he was *teaching his Disciples the Things of his Kingdom*, settling the Constitution of his Church, and putting Things in the Posture in which he design'd they should continue to the End of the World, and acting as the Head and Pattern of his Church in a very particular Manner. And if so, we seem to keep closer to his Example in our way of praying, than in yours.

These Reflections may I hope suffice for your *Second Inference*, that the blessed Jesus *was contented to join in the Meanest Forms with the Publick, rather than separate from it.*

I pass on now to what follows immediately after the 18 Prayers which you have transcribed. *Since our Lord spared not freely to tell the* Jews *of all the Corruptions which they had in his time run into, and on all Occasions reproached them therewith, had it been contrary to the Will of God to use Set Forms of Prayer in his publick Service, or had it been displeasing to him to be addressed to in such mean Forms, when much better might been made;*

made; we may be sure he would have told them of both and joined with them in neither: But he having never found fault with them for using Set Forms, but on the contrary taught his own Disciples a Set Form to pray by; nor at any time expressed a dislike of the Forms then in use, because of the meanness and emptiness of them, but always joined with them in their Synagogues in the Forms above recited; this may satisfy our Dissenters, if any thing can satisfy Men so perversely bent after their own Ways, that neither our using Set Forms of Prayer in our publick Worship, nor the using of such which they think not sufficiently Edifying, can be Objections sufficient to justify them in their Refusal to join with us in them. For they have the Example of Christ in both these thus directly against them. Now I shall not need to enlarge much here.

I allow, 1. that *had it been contrary to the Will of God, to use a Set Form of Prayer in his publick Worship,* the Redeemer *would have told them of it, as he did of other Corruptions,* and *would never have joined therein.* But this does not concern us, who don't say that the use thereof is contrary to the Will of God or a Corruption.

And what tho' he *did join in them*? We have not his *Example against* us here; because we can be no farther bound by his *Example*, than as the Reason and Nature of Things makes it requisite that we should be so, or than it was designed that we should be so. Let it be proved therefore, that the Reason and Nature of Things make it requisite that we imitate his *Example* in this Case, and that it was his Design that we should do so, and then I am confident there will not be many Dissenters in *England.* This is the shortest way with them, as well as the fairest. But till this be done, let us not be reproached as not treading in his Steps.

Besides, what tho' he *did join in Set Forms with the Publick?* That is no Proof, that he *ought* to have done

done so, or that he was *obliged* to do it, and not at Liberty to avoid or refuse it. And therefore it can't affect our Case, on whom it was pressed as a Duty to *join with the Publick in Set Forms*, and charged as a great Fault not to do so, so as that *nothing is sufficient to excuse us in refusing it.* Prove, Sir, that he lay under Obligations thereunto, and that he did it in Compliance with those Obligations, and that they were such as come into our Case too, and then you will say somewhat to the Purpose; but not till then.

2. As to *not reproaching them with the Meanness of their Forms, which* you say *he would have done if it had been displeasing to God to be addressed to in such mean Forms when much better might have been made*; this supposes what will not be granted you, *viz.* that these Forms were so *Mean* as you say they were, and *that better might have been made then.* They seem to me to have been Extraordinary, considering the Darkness and Degeneracy of those Times, (as even our Forms were at the Time of the Reformation,) and very well suited to the State of the Church at that Time, and that none could have *made better for them then,* unless St. *John the Baptist*, or the *Blessed Jesus himself* had composed them; and neither of them lay under Obligations to it; nor would the *Jews* have made use of them if they had done it, they were so prejudiced against both, and so Tenacious of their Customs and Traditions.

And supposing too that their Prayers are Mean, in comparison of what they might have been, and yet that God was not displeased with them, tho' they were so, and that he is not so with any other *mean* Forms neither; these can be no Reasons why the *Dissenters* should not press for a Reformation in your Forms, which they look upon to be Mean, before they *join with you in them*; because it is cer-

tainly *more pleasing to God*, to pray to him in well-composed Forms than in those that are not so; because it is more for his Honour, and the Credit of his Worship. And it is not enough *not to displease him*, but we are also to *please* him as far as we can.

And yet farther, *Meanness* is but one of the Circumstances upon which we refuse *to join in the publick Forms*; and therefore tho' this Objection should be taken away, yet we may be *Dissenters* notwithstanding, without any Fault at all. Tho' the Example of Christ would *satisfy* us upon the Head of *mean Forms*, yet it would be no Argument for our joining in the *English*, if they have other Circumstances more disputable than that of Meanness attending them. It was much easier for him to conform to the *Jewish Liturgy*, than it is for us to conform to *Our's*, all things considered. He is no Pattern to us therefore in this Case, who have Difficulties to encounter with, which he had not. And pardon me, if I say I can't think he would have conformed to it, if so much had been required of him as of us; that is, if he had had so many things as we have to be *satisfied* about, if he had been necessarily obliged to have submitted to such Restraints, and were to come under such Obligations as we are by Vertue of a *Subscription* and *Declaration*. Under these Circumstances it seems to me he would not have conformed to *that Liturgy*, any more than we do to *this*. And the Reason why I think so is, because he has given us the Liberty that we contend for against such *Impositions*, and I scarce think he has given us more Liberty than he would have taken himself in a like Case.

I apprehend indeed that you may say here, that what I alledge only concerns *Ministerial Conformity*, and not *Lay Conformity*; for it is only *that*, which has these Difficulties, attending it. I answer, its true,

true; it does so. But then I say, 1. That you have confined his Example to neither, and therefore I may consider it either way, as it affects either the one or the other. 2. You would do well to let us know, how the Blessed Jesus *joined in those Forms*, whether as a *Minister* or as a *private Person*, or whether as *Both*, sometimes as *one*, and sometimes as the *other*; that we may know who are the Persons particularly concerned to imitate him, whether *both*, or *one only*; and if *one only*, *which of the two* it is. 3. If I can but excuse the *Dissenting Ministers* from Conformity, by making it appear that they act not Inconsistent with the Example of Christ, there will be no Difficulty in bringing off the *Laity* clear of all Guilt in adhering to them. And really any Communion in general that bears hard upon the *Clergy*, is not like to be easy to the *Laity*. They must come in for their share of *Hardships*, *Restraints* and *Impositions*. Nay so far as the *Clergy* are confined, the *Laity* are too; for they can have things no otherwise than as the *Clergy* are directed and obliged to dispense them to them. For *their own Sakes* therefore they ought to insist upon the Liberty that is due to the *Clergy*. And we see how true this is in Fact in the Case of the Church of *Rome*, which has enslaved the *People* by first hampering the *Priests*. *Ministers*, in short, are not to be considered as a separate Body from the *People*, but in Relation to them, and therefore what affects them, affects the *People* too.

And then 3. As for his *teaching his own Disciples a Set Form to pray by*, which is here produced in Favour of *Set Forms* in the general, tho' I should allow you the *Fact*, yet not the *Consequence* that you would draw from it, and that you must draw from it to make it serve your purpose, *viz.* That our Saviour hereby put them in the way of praying *only*, or *ordinarily by Set Forms*, in opposition

to *our way of praying*? For you must carry the Consequence as far as this if you would urge it upon us. This Consequence therefore I cannot allow. I will grant you indeed that we may infer from hence, that the use of a Set Form is not *contrary to the Will of God*, or a *Corruption*, but that it is very *Lawful*; and upon some Occasions too very *Expedient*, *viz.* as an help for the *Young* and *Unexperienced*, and those that can't pray *pertinently*, *judiciously* and *methodically*, without it, which was the Case of the *Disciples* when this *Form* was given to them. But I see no reason to go any farther. It *allows* that way of praying, but does not *recommend* it, or give it the preference to ours by any means. And tho' it was given the Disciples with that very Design *to teach them to pray*, yet not to *teach them to pray* by Set Forms *only*, or *mainly*. *One single Form* could never answer that purpose; a whole Liturgy must have been given them for such an End; and I verily believe our Lord would have given them such a one, if he had designed to have put them in that way of praying; or, if not at that time, yet at least when there came to be a necessity for it, *viz.* when the *Jewish* Liturgy must be laid aside, as not fit for the Service of his Church after his *Resurrection*. Or he would have put his Apostles upon drawing up a *Liturgy* for themselves and the rest of the Christian Church, if he had not done it himself. One or other of these Things was absolutely necessary to serve his purpose, because the *Jewish Liturgy* being taken away, and no other substituted in the room of it, they must be without any one at all.

But not to insist upon this, it is plain, I think, they *did not so understand him*, if we may judge by their *Practice*, as without doubt we may; and if they did not so understand him, I see no Reason that we have to do so, for they were likelier to come at his Meaning than we, and certainly did so;

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and practised accordingly. Let us then look into their *Practice*; and see if they took this Method that they are here supposed by you to be directed to. Now that they did not in *some particular Cases*, *is evident*; and that it was not so in *their ordinary Worship*, *is very probable*. 1. That they did not take this Course *in some particular Cases*, *is evident*. As for Instance, from that Prayer of St. *Peter*, *Acts* iv. that of St. *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. that of St. *Peter* or St. *John*, *Acts* viii. that of St. *Peter*, *Acts* ix. that of St. *Paul*, *Acts* xx. and *Acts* xxviii.

Which Instances look more our way than yours, and may be much more easily interpreted of *Free Prayer* than of *Set Forms*. For 1. The Occasions were so Extraordinary, that we can't suppose they had any Forms at hand suited to them. 2. Their Prayers are so immediately connected with those Occasions, that there was not time to compose pertinent Set Forms, or at least not for those who joined with them to have Copies of them, and be acquainted with them; so that they must be New, and unheard before to their Fellow-Worshippers, even tho' they had been pre-composed by the Apostles. And 3. There was no Necessity that they should compose Forms, either for their own sake, or for the sake of those that joined with them, being so full of the Holy Ghost as they were.

And 2. That *they did not take the Method of praying by Set Forms in their ordinary Worship*, *is very probable*. Their History indeed says nothing of this expressly, either one way or the other. But there are some Passages from whence we may make a pretty near guess how they conducted themselves in this Affair. We may learn *their* Practice from that of the *Churches* they planted, which to be sure was answerable to it. Now that the *Churches* in their Time did not pray by *Set Forms*, (which yet they would have done, if the *Apostles* had led them the way by their Example,)

Example,) we may fairly gather from that Prayer of the Church for St. *Peter*, *Acts* xii. 5, 12. who was then in Prison, and designed for Execution the next Day: That in all appearance was such a Prayer as we pray, and not one by *Set Forms*, for the Reasons mention'd under the foregoing Head. Let us look also into the *ordinary Worship* of the Church, and we shall find the Case the same. For this purpose I would refer you to 1 *Cor.* xiv. 14, 15. *For if I pray in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit prays, but my Understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.* I argue from the Case that the *Apostle* there refers to, *viz. praying in an unknown Tongue*, one of the Faults which that Church had run into. Now we can't reasonably think, that the Church had a Liturgy, (nor consquently that any other Churches then had any such Form; for no Reason can be assigned why the Church of *Corinth* should be singular in this Matter;) when there were Persons in it *who prayed in an unknown Tongue*; but it appears more probable, that they were left to their Liberty in Prayer, otherwise they would not have been guilty of such a Fault: Unless we can suppose Prayers drawn up for them in an *unknown Tongue*, which is a Thing hardly to be imagined; or that they translated them into *an unknown Tongue* in the use of them, which is every whit as inconceivable. And it is very remarkable, that the *Apostle*, when he comes to cure this Fault, does not recommend a *Liturgy* to prevent it for the future, when yet there seemed to be a very plausible Occasion for it, as plausible as ever could be pretended in After-Ages; but only tells them, that they ought not to have done so, and charges them not to do so again, and leaves them to their Liberty as before.

Upon the whole, I can't but think the *Apostles* used our way of Praying, and not that of *Set Forms*, and

and consequently, that they did not understand our Saviour as putting them upon that way of Praying when he gave them this Form. And it is from hence that we take Encouragement in our way. Which I think we may safely do; and that notwithstanding the great difference between them and us, as they had such *Extraordinary Capacities* for this Service above us. That we can't do it so well as they, is no Argument why we should not do it at all; any more than it would be so in the Case of *Preaching*, in which they exceeded us as much as in that of *Prayer*.

After all that has been said, you will allow me, *Reverend Sir*, to leave the World to judge, whether you had any Reason for that stinging Reflection, *This may satisfy our Dissenters, if any Thing can satisfy Men so perversely bent after their own ways*, &c.

You proceed to put Forms and no Forms, Mean Forms and Elegant ones, upon a perfect Equality, with regard to the Favour and Acceptance of God. *The Truth is*, (say you, p 378) *whether there be a Form, or no Form; or whether the Form be elegantly or meanly composed, nothing of this availeth to the recommending of our Prayers to God. It is the true and sincere Devotion of the Heart only, that can make them Acceptable to him. For it is this only that gives Life and Vigour and true Acceptance to all our Religious Addresses to him: Without this, how elegantly and moving soever the Prayer may be composed, and with how much seeming Fervour and Zeal it may be poured out, all it as Dead Matter, and of no Validity in the Presence of our God. But if we bring this with us to his Worship, any Form of Prayer, provided it be of Sound Words, may be sufficient to make us and our Worship acceptable unto him, and obtain Mercy, Peace and Pardon from him. For it is not the Fineness of Speech, or the Elegancy of Expression, but the Sincerity of the Mind and the true Devotion of the Heart only, that God regards in all our Prayers which we offer up unto him.*

him. Give me leave, Sir, to say, that this I fear is not true, or however that it cannot answer your Design.

1. I fear this is not true. I grant that God looks at the Heart *Chiefly*, but I can't say that he does so *only*. Devotion is the main thing he insists upon, but other things come in for their proper share in his Regard too. He is not wholly Indifferent to them, tho' he sets the Devotion of the Heart above them. He expects that every one should serve him with his best; and he looks for more and better from some than from others. If a Person can serve him better with Forms than without, he is to do so; and on the other Hand, if a Person can serve him better without Forms than with them, he is to serve him in that manner. So far *Forms* and *no Forms* are equal to him, and no farther; and with regard to *mean Forms and elegant ones* in particular, it can never be supposed that granting there should be equal Devotion in the use of them, they should be equally pleasing to God, because *mean ones* can never be so much for the Honour of God, and the Credit of Christian Worship in the World, as *elegant* and *well composed* Forms are.

But then, 2. Supposing this be true, it will not answer your End, which is to reconcile the Dissenters to the use of *Set Forms* in the general, and to the use of yours in particular, which they look upon to be *Mean*. For tho' both were equally pleasing to God in themselves, *Forms* as pleasing as *no Forms*, and *mean ones* as those of the best Composure, yet still if they are not equally *Edifying* to our selves, we may lawfully refuse to join in them. For we are directed in our Worship to manage all to the best *Edification*, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. And cannot more effectually please God than by consulting our own Edification. Now we apprehend, that

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is better provided for in our way of Prayer than by *Set Forms*, and without doubt by *excellent* Forms better than by *mean* ones.

I intirely agree with you in what follows, *p.* 379. *It is true, a new gingle of Words, and a fervent Delivery of them by the Minister in Prayer, may have some Effect upon the Auditors, and often raise, in such of them as are affected this way, a Devotion, which otherwise they would not have. But this being wholly Artificial, which all drops again, as soon as the Engine is removed that raised it, it is none of that true habitual Devotion, which can alone render us Acceptable to our God in any of our Addresses to him. This we ought to bring with us, whenever we come into the House of God to worship before him.* But I cannot add with you, *And with this in any Form, which is of Sound Words, we may pray acceptably to him*, that is, equally so, unless it be the best that we can come at. I allow this is Necessary, so that *none can ever be acceptable to him without it*; as you add; but that it will make up known voluntary Defects, is what I can't assent to without better Reason. Besides, you suppose herein what I hardly esteem possible, that there can be true *Devotion* in the use of those Forms, which are known and thought to be *Mean* by the very Person who uses them. Another, who has a better Opinion of them, may use the very same with great Devotion: But he that comes to them with this prejudice, must, I believe, find his *Devotion* very much to flag in the use of them: I am sure mine would in such a Case.

I have but one thing more to take notice of. And that is this. *But whether any Form of such Sound Words can be well preserved in those Extemporary Effusions of Prayer, which some delight in; whether it does not often lead them into Indecent, and sometimes into Blasphemous Expressions, to the great Dishonour of God,*

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and the Damage of Religion, it behoves those, who are for this way, seriously to consider. Now we have *consider'd* this, and that *seriously* too, and can't find but that *a Form of Sound Words may be well preserved, and very well too,* in that way of praying that we *delight in*; and that *it does not often lead us into Indecent,* and much less *into Blasphemous Expressions, to the great dishonour of God, and the damage of Religion.* How far some Persons may be guilty here, I can't say, but I can assure you, the generality are not. And as for personal Failings of this sort, or any other, they are by no Means chargeable upon the Way it self, but on the Imprudence of the faulty Person. And here you go upon a groundless Supposition, that our Prayers are *Extemporary Effusions,* as you call them. By which I suppose you mean that they are *Unpremeditated,* and mere *sudden Thoughts.* Whereas we not only allow *Premeditation,* but plead for it, and practice it; not leaving the Service wholly to the present Suggestions of the Imagination, but calling in Prudence for our Aid beforehand (especially upon extraordinary Occasions) *to furnish the Materials, to lay the Method, to proportion the Length to the Occasion, and to form the Expression.* And so nothing *Indecent,* and much less *Blasphemous,* is ever like to creep in: It must break thro' a great deal of Caution and Care if it does, and that it is not like to do. I won't say indeed that all take this Method; but I am sure the Principles of Dissenters oblige them to act in this manner, and from my Acquaintance with them, I know that this is the Practice of many.

But supposing our Way were liable to this Inconvenience, you will remember, Sir, that, yours has others often attending it, which a wise and good Man would guard against too, *viz. Superstition, and a great Number of Forms, and Ceremonies,* together

gether with *intricate and perplexed Rubricks about the use of them.* And this is what you yourself have given me Occasion to observe by what you say of the *Jewish Forms.* Your Words are these, *p.* 274. *These at first were very few, but since they are increased unto a very large Bulk, which makes their Synagogue Service very long and tedious; and the Rubrick by which they regulate it is very perplexed and intricate, and incumbered with many Rites and Ceremonious Observances; in all which they equal, if not exceed, both the Superstition, and also the Length, of the Popish Service.* All this indeed is but the *possible* Consequence of *Forms,* not the *Certain* one: And the same I say of the other, this, and that, and the other thing, is but the *possible* Consequence of *Free-prayer,* not the *Certain* one; and therefore not to be charged upon the way itself, or any Argument for the laying it aside, as you seem to intimate it to be.

Thus, Doctor, I have considered all that you have seen fit to offer upon this Head, and I hope with all the Deference that is due to You, and all the Impartiality that is due to Truth. And tho' I have not been so happy as to see Evidence enough in what you have offered on this Argument to induce me to become your Proselyte, yet I can assure you, I am,

Your great Admirer

and humble Servant.

W. J.

TO THE
Author of the Occasional Paper.

SIR,

I Question not but you have read with great Pleasure, the very learned and excellent *Connection of the History of the Old and New Testament*, by Dr. *Prideaux*; and are fully sensible how much the learned World is indebted to him, for having finish'd a Noble and Useful Design in so Masterly a Way. I cannot doubt but you have, with me, a very high Esteem for a Person, whose Writings deserve so well, and which are likely to be valued as long as a Taste of good Learning shall remain among us.

Yet, *Sir*, if I may be permitted to guess at your Temper by your Writings, you are not so prejudic'd in Favour of any Persons, how deserving soever, as not to see their Mistakes; tho' you know how to see them without diminishing any Thing of that Esteem and Respect that is due to their real Merit.

In this Confidence it is, I take the Liberty to send you some Strictures on one Passage of the Doctor's *2d Vol.*; assuring you, that it is far from any Vanity of Criticising a great Author; much less with any Intention to derogate from the Reputation of his Excellent Book, which loses nothing in my own Esteem on any other Account; that I think

think the following Passage deserves a Publick Observation.

The Doctor, among the Reasons he gives for his large Account of the *Jewish* and other Cycles, made use of for the Time of *Easter*, has given this for One, " To open the Way to a better Understanding of the Modern Dispute, which our Dissenters have here set on Foot among us. For they alledge it as one Reason of their Dissention, that *Easter* is put wrong in the Kalendar of the Common Prayer-Book, and that therefore they cannot give their Assent and Consent thereto. It is a very odd Thing, (*he adds*,) that this Sort of People, who are against keeping any *Easter* at all, should raise any Quarrel about the Time of its Observance." *

I must own, I was surprised at reading this Passage. That the Doctor, in a Work of such different Nature, and much better Use, should think of falling upon his Protestant Brethren, and endeavour to expose them for a supposed Weakness; but more especially, that he should choose to do so in a Case where he seems so much to mistake them, and the Controversy they have had on that Foot.

For, with Submission, they have never raised any Quarrel at all about the *Time* of observing *Easter*. They have not, that I know of, thought it worth quarrelling about; much less have they made it a considerable Reason, or any Reason at all for their Dissent. They have indeed apprehended, that a Declaration of Assent to all and every Thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, *&c.* according to the Act of *Uniformity*, did include an Assent to the Rule

* *Preface to 2d Vol. p. 7.*

Rule for the Time of obſerving *Eaſter* which is found in that Book. This Rule they have alſo apprehended ſuch, as they could not ſo well Aſſent to. But in this they raiſed no Quarrel themſelves about the Time of obſerving *Eaſter*; and as far as I know the Diſſenters, they are not a Sort of People ever like to raiſe one. Yet ſure when they are called upon to give their Aſſent to any Thing, they may without Reflection judge whether they can Aſſent to it or no. And they have not yet alledged it as one Reaſon of their Diſſention, that *Eaſter* is put wrong in the Kalendar; but that they apprehend they are required to Aſſent to it as right, when yet they take it to be wrong, which is a very different Matter.

How the Doctor came thus to repreſent the Caſe, I am at a loſs to imagine. Eſpecially when, in Anſwer to their Objection, he aims ſo much to take off the Difficulty of their Aſſent, as ſeems to ſhew, he was well aware of the true State of the Queſtion, however he came here to forget it.

Since the Doctor then has been pleaſed to bring this Queſtion once more on the Stage, in a Book univerſally read, and deſervedly eſteem'd; if you ſhall think it proper to give this Letter a Place in your Paper, I will endeavour to give the World a fairer Account of it than I think Dr. *Prideaux* has done.

The Objection ſtands thus. " The Rule in the " Kalendar ſays, *Eaſter-Day* is always the firſt *Sun-* " *day* after the firſt Full-Moon, which happens next " after the One and Twentieth Day of *March*, *&c.* " but this will ſeldom be found true, according to " the Tables in the Common Prayer Book, and ſo " that the Rule and Tables diſagree with each " other."

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The Doctor owns this Objection would be true, were it the Natural Full-Moon that is *meant* in the Rule: But he supposes, " Besides the Natural Full-" Moon, there is an Ecclesiastical Full-Moon, that " is, a Full-Moon Day so called by the Church, " tho' there be no Natural Full-Moon thereon; " and of this Ecclesiastical Full-Moon, the Rule " and Tables are to be understood. *".

Now the Gentlemen that have objected the Difference between the Rule and Tables, have indeed thought, that the *Meaning* and *Intention* of the Rule, as also of the several Cycles, as well as the Invention of *Golden Numbers*, *Paschal Terms*, &c. were to bring the Ecclesiastical Computation of *Easter*, and the Moveable Feasts depending thereon, to an Agreement with the Astronomical Revolutions of the Sun and Moon, as the Doctor himself elsewhere observes †. So far then as a Rule design'd only for this End is wrong in the Use and Application of it, so far they think they may judge that the Rule, and the Tables design'd to answer it, do not agree with each other, because the *Meaning* and *Intention* of the whole was to find out in each Year, the Real and Natural Full-Moon, which happened first after the Vernal Equinox, but which it is confess'd the Tables do not reach to. They enquire not whether it was a Matter of any Importance to be done in this or another Way: But since it is intended to be done this Way, they not only observe, That the Tables by a small Error in the Nineteen Years Cycle, but by length of Time grown considerable, do not answer this *Intention*, and therefore differ from the *Meaning* of the Rule.

This,

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* *P.* 8. † *P.* 231, 232.

This, it is true, is only an Astronomical, and not a Theological Error: But if their Assent was required to it, as they apprehend in this Case it was, they could not give it to any the least and most innocent known Error without the Guilt of Falshood, which is to be sure a Theological Crime. And however they or others may innocently consent to the *Use* of it, which the Doctor says is all that the Declaration of Assent and Consent obliges to: Yet he ought in Justice to them to let the World know, That they never objected to the *Use* of it; but went all along upon this Foot, That the Act obliges to Assent to the *Truth*, as well as Consent to the *Use*, which on supposal of an Error and Disagreement they could not innocently do.

But it seems to Dr. *Prideaux*, that neither "the "Kalendar nor this Rule belonging to it is within "that Declaration (of Assent and Consent); for "he thinks it cannot be brought under any of the "Particulars mentioned in the Act which requires "it." This is at least a Piece of News they never heard before; tho', if it should prove true, I dare answer for the Dissenters, they are not so fond of this or any other Reason for Separation, but they would be obliged to the Doctor if he could remove them all upon the same Foot: But there is Reason to fear it wants further Confirmation. For the Assent required by the Act of *Uniformity* is to all and every Thing contain'd and prescribed in and by the Book, entitled, *the Book of Common Prayer*. Now this Rule and Kalendar are found in the Books so Entitled: One of which was annexed to the Act, and is the Book intended in the Declaration. And both the Rule and the Kalendar are of such use to the Form and Order of many Parts of the Common Prayer, that they solely direct the Time of using the Epistles, Gospels and Collects

Collects for all the Moveable Feasts, and seem therefore intended as a very necessary and extensive Rubrick. Upon the whole, Sir, what could tempt Dr. *Prideaux* to end with this severe Reflection? "To make such a Trifle to be a Reason of breaking the Communion, and separating from the Church, is what Men of common Sense or common Integrity may be ashamed of. ——— This shews how hard they are put to it to find Reasons for their Separation, when they urge such a wretched and frivolous One for it as this *."

I could not help making a melancholy Reflection upon reading these Words: What mighty Power (thought I,) what strange Influence may Party-Prejudice have, even upon the greatest Minds, to turn them aside from noble Views to little trivial Matters, and, which is yet worse, provoke them to unreasonable and uncharitable Reflections on their Brethren? Has what the Dissenters object to the Rule for finding *Easter* been ever made by them a Ground for breaking Communion or separating from the Church? Has the Church so much as ever been blamed by them for using it, or any the least scruple made of Communion with it on that Account? Has it ever been used farther than as one Difficulty, among many far greater, in the Form of Assent supposed to be required to Ministerial Conformity? And in that View is it so altogether without shew of Reason, that they deserve to be treated as Men either wanting Common Sense or Common Honesty? However frivolous the Objection may be, methinks it can hardly call for such Contempt and Reproach. And surely neither Prudence nor Charity will

* P. 12.

allow it, where what is censured as most frivolous and trifling in the Objection, is really no Part of it, but centers at last in the Censurer's own Invention or Mistake.

It was very surprizing to me to find such a Reason formally given by the Doctor in his Preface, for the Account of the *Jewish* and other Cycles in his Book. That Account might well have passed without any such Reason for it, as very proper to the Design it self. It seems a Step out of his Way on purpose for that unkind Reflection on his Dissenting Brethren, rather than any needful Apology for himself.

And I the rather think so, because another Reason he gives for it could hardly have any greater Weight with him than only to keep this a little in Countenance; for the Dissention about *Easter* between our *British* and *Saxon* Ancestors did not stand in need of a new Explication; since the very same Account the Doctor gives of it was already given (to omit others) by a known Author in our own Language, Mr. *Collier* in his *Ecclesiastical History*. In the Account he gives of the Dispute on that Subject before King *Oswi* at *Whitby*, then *Streaneshaleh*, he mentions both the Difference of the 84 Years Cycle continued in use by the *Britains*, and the 19 Years Cycle then in use with the *Romans*; and the *Roman* Custom of reckoning from the 15th Day of the Moon to the 21st † inclusive, when the *Britains* used to reckon from the 14th to the 20th.

I shall only add, I have so great an Esteem for your Judgment, and the good Design you have

† Vol. 1. p. 97.

have to promote Impartial Liberty, and the General Good of Mankind, that if you so far approve of this Letter as to let it appear in the World in your Paper, it will be a great Satisfaction to,

Your very humble Servant.

June 23. 1718.

ERRATA.

In the last Paper, Numb. II. Pag. 36. lin. 24. *for*, where *there* cannot, *read*, where *these* cannot.

Just Publish'd.

A Collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1716. Vol. I. with a Preface.

A Collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1717. Vol. II. With a Preface and a Table of Contents to both Volumes.

~~The Occasional Paper, Vol. III. Numb. I. Of Retractations.~~

The Occasional Paper, Vol. III. Numb. II. Of *Bugbears.*

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. IV.

Containing several

LETTERS.

VIZ.

I. To the Author of this Paper; upon a *Remarkable Saying*, insisted on by Dr. *Bisſ*, in his *Sermons* on the *Beauty of Holineſs in the Common-Prayer*.

II. Remarks upon a Paſſage in Dr. *Bisſ*'s, and another in Dr. *Lupton*'s Sermons, before the Sons of the Clergy; concerning the Authority of the *Fathers*, in interpreting Scripture: Directed to the Author of this Paper.

III. A Letter directed to the Author of *Vulgar Prepoſſeſſions in Favour of the Biſhop of* Bangor: By a Well-Wiſher to the Occaſional-Paper.

IV. A Letter from Mr. *De la Pillonniere*, to the Author of this Paper; allowing him to publiſh a Letter of Mr. *Cotton Mather* of *New-England*.

V. Mr. *Cotton Mather*'s Letter to Mr. *De la Pillonniere*; Printed from the Original.

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TO THE AUTHOR OF THE Occasional Paper.

SIR, Exon. *Nov.* 30. 1717.

I Turned over lately some Sermons of the Reverend Dr. *Bisse*, which have the Title of *The Beauty of Holiness in the Common-Prayer*; and could not fail of observing, that he has advanced many odd Principles and Maxims in them, contrary to the ancient Sentiments of the Church of *England*. The Reverend Mr. *Lewis* has sufficiently called him to an Account for some of them. But there is one over-look'd by that worthy Gentleman, which appears to me as liable to exception as any of the rest: It is in *p.* 148. "It was a remarkable Saying, found-"ed on the Reason of Things, that a preach-"ing Church cannot stand; and it is also "founded on the Judgment of God, that a

" Church, which places its Religion in Preach-
" ing, shall not stand." I agree with the Doctor in calling this *a remarkable Saying*, especially in the Mouth of a Protestant Divine. And since he has not thought fit to point us to the Author of so judicious a Remark, I will beg leave to suppose, that it came out of the Popish Mint, or at least was stamped in the Reign of the *Book of Sports*.

I know no *Church*, to which this Imputation can properly be applied, that it *places its Religion in Preaching*. But no doubt this was designed for a sharp Innuendo upon Somebody: It was thought, I suppose, an invidious Turn upon the Protestant Dissenters, because they may have more frequent Sermons among them than elsewhere. Some other Writers of the Doctor's Size, have thrown out the like Flirt at them; but with no manner of Justice, or Truth.

If the meaning of the Reflection be, that they magnify Preaching, to the Exclusion or Diminution of any other Parts of publick Worship, nothing can be more injurious; for they join Prayer with it, and the Singing of Psalms in all their Publick Assemblies; and as frequently as their Neighbours, administer the Sacraments there. And indeed it is a little odd and inconsistent, that they should sometimes be censured for their long Prayers, and at others, for placing all their Religion in preaching.

If the Doctor intends by this Insinuation that the Dissenters place their Religion in This, or in any thing else which is only an instrumental Part of Religion, so as to be indifferent about the more substantial Parts of it,

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consisting in Faith and Holiness, and good Works; I shall leave it to their known Character, whether they deserve this Imputation more than any other sort of People.

But if the Reproach is cast upon them, merely because they have more frequent Preaching in their Congregations than some others; or because they think this should be an ordinary Branch of the Work of every Religious Assembly; they are not ashamed to own it, nor afraid of the Force of the Doctor's remarkable Saying, That *a preaching Church cannot stand:* especially since the Doctor has not been at the Pains to shew them, how it is *founded on the Reason of Things*. That appears to me, to be quite on the other Side. Ignorance of the most important Matters of Religion would certainly over-spread most Places, without Preaching. This is too evident in many of the common People, as Matters now stand; and it must prodigiously increase, if there were no publick Method of Instruction.

It was by Preaching that Christianity first obtained footing in the World, notwithstanding the greatest Oppositions and Discouragements. In order to this, the Apostles *gave themselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word* *. And St. *Paul* gives a Charge to the Bishops of *Ephesus*, when he was taking his leave of them, to *feed the Church of God*; which must be by Preaching, and the Administration of the Sacraments. And he requires *Timothy* to *preach the Word*, to *be instant in Season and out of Season*. He was so much set

* Acts vi. 4.

upon this Work himself, that he seems to esteem it his principal Business, *I was not sent* (saith he) *to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.* This Practice was attended with the greatest Success, till the World was proselyted to Christianity. Nor is the Occasion for it ceased, where this is already become the publick Profession. Vast Numbers among us still need to be instructed in the Principles of Religion, to be cautioned against spreading Errors, and persuaded from a vicious Course. Even those who are already truly Religious, need at least frequently to be put in mind of their Duty, and excited to the Practice of it; while the Affairs of Life are so apt to divert us all from a due Attention to the Duties which are preparatory to a future Happiness.

That which was the Means of establishing Christianity at first, had a considerable Share in reviving and reforming it from the Corruptions of Popery afterwards. Sir *Edwin Sandes* has a particular Observation to this purpose. * "The chief Means (says he,) "whereby the Reformers of Religion did "prevail in all Places, was their singular Assiduity and Dexterity in Preaching, and especially in great Cities, and the Palaces of "Princes." And says the same Author, † "The *French* Protestants make Preaching an "Essential and chief Part of the Worship of "God; whereas the *Romanists* make the Mass "only a Work of Duty, and the going to a "Sermon but a Matter of Convenience, and "such as is left free to Men's Pleasures and

* *Europæ Speculum*, p. 76. † *Ib.* p. 77.

Oppor-

"Opportunities, without Imputation of Sin." I'll beg leave to match the Doctor's *remarkable Saying* with another of a noted Jesuit, a Master of one of their Colleges, which is related by *Chamier* *, in the Year 1584. he thus harangued his Auditory on a *Good-Friday*. "To be fond of hearing many Sermons, and "of the frequent Reading of the Scriptures, "is in truth no Sign of a good Catholick, "but rather the Badge of a Heretick, who "pleases himself with these things, as an Ape "does with a Nut. The only Delight of a "Catholick, is to hear many Masses, and often confess himself. He that neglects and "despises this, offends more heinously than he "who never heard a Sermon, or saw a Bible "in his Life. The *Roman* Catholick saith "not, The Word, the Word; the Scripture, "the Scripture; but Mass and Confession." The Doctor, I believe, may find a great many such Authorities among the *Romanists*, in favour of his Maxim; but very few among the Protestants, who agree in disclaiming Ignorance for the Mother of Devotion.

I believe nothing will induce any good Christians to wish there were fewer Sermons among us than there are, as long as the Clergy imploy their Pains upon the proper Subjects for the Pulpit; to explain the Holy Scriptures, to instruct Men in their Duty to God, their Neighbours, and themselves; and to inforce these by the proper Arguments and Motives of Reason and Christianity. But if, instead of such useful and pious Discourses, the

* *Epist. Jesuit.* Genev. 1599. Epist. 3.

Pulpit

Pulpit is imploy'd to vent Party-Rage; to excite Sedition in the State, or Animosities among Protestants; to preach up Superstition for Religion; and to propagate such Notions among the People, as betray and undermine the Foundations of the Reformation; a true Protestant will not care how seldom the Publick Assemblies are so prostituted.

If you think fit to allow this at any time a place in your Paper, I leave it to your Correction and Improvement. Who am, *&c.*

II.

To the Author of the Occasional Paper.

SIR,

THE two last Sermons to the *Sons of the Clergy*, though their Excellencies lie in a very different Way, yet both agree in one common Opinion, which I take to be very Exceptionable, and of hurtful Tendency from Persons of Figure in the Church, and under the Countenance of so great an Audience. Dr. *Bisse* is always *diffuse* and *florid*, like a *Garland* stuck round with *Flowers*, or a *Flourish* round a great Letter at the Beginning of a Book. His Stile is luscious and surfeiting, like feeding upon Sauce. He often says a Thing *Bright* and *Piquant*, but hardly ever any thing *exactly* Just and True. He harangues well, but Never Reasons. In Page 11,

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12, he lays down this Assertion, * *The ancient Writings and Interpretations of the Fathers, the Authority of Each taking Place with their Antiquity, have been, are, ought, and must be the Rule of Judging in all succeeding Ages of the Church. Such is the Authority of the Ancient Fathers, next in Degree, as in Time to that of the Apostles; the Fathers as Interpreters, the Apostles as Enditers of the Holy Gospel.*

Dr. *Lupton*'s is a *grave* and *pious* Discourse, has a great deal of good Instruction in it, and many Marks of a serious and thoughtful Mind. I wish I could think so throughout: But in the first Inference I find him touching the same String. *We must*, he says †, *provide for our own Safety by depending, as 'tis our Duty to depend, upon the General and Uninterrupted Sense of the Christian Church.* Dr. *Biss* makes the Ancient Fathers, according to their *Seniority*, Interpreters of the Scriptures: I suppose their Authority, like other things, decayed with time; that after the Labour and Enquiry of many Ages, we now understand the Scriptures less, and shall come at length to be quite in the dark about 'em; as the Sun gradually declines till it quite sets. And yet some have thought that the Writings of the *first* Fathers are less to be regarded for this Purpose, than some later ones, because they came out of the Schools of the Gentile Philosophy, and mixed many of their peculiar No-

* Dr. Biss's *Sermon to the Sons of the Clergy*, 1716.
† Lupton's *Sermon before the Sons of the Clergy*, 1717. p. 37.

or thought requisite or necessary to Salvation. And, ‡ *Tho' the Church be a Witness, and a Keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the Same, so besides the Same, ought it not to enforce any thing to be believ'd for Necessity of Salvation.* And, * *General Councils may err, and have erred, —— wherefore Things ordained by them as necessary to Salvation, have neither Strength nor Authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of the Holy Scripture.* And in the Book of Homilies the Church declares, † *That those things which are necessary to Salvation, to be believed or done, are so plain in the Scripture, that 'tis every Man's Duty to learn them thence.* So that this Language is wholly unknown, and entirely disagreeable to the most authentick Records of the Establish'd Church. of England.

Besides, Are not the Scriptures as *intelligible*, and easy to be understood, as the Writings of the Fathers, and Councils of the Church? Are there not great Differences about the Sense of the Fathers, as well as the Sense of the Scriptures? and much greater Reason for them; for they have been more interpolated and corrupted, more mutilated and mistaken by Accident and Design; not spread into so many Hands, or preserved with equal Care with the Holy Scriptures. And how then would this help us, or bring us ever the nearer the Truth? If, for Example, 'tis difficult to understand the Sense of the *Gospels* and *Epistles* of the Apostles, is there not at least an e-

‡ *Artic.* 20.
† *Hom.* 2.
* *Artic.* 21.

qual

qual Difficulty to understand the Meaning of *Ignatius*'s Epistles, and *Clemens Romanus*, and *Alexandrinus*? Is the Christian Church at all agreed about the Sense of the first Writers, any more than that of the Scriptures? Are there not many Difficulties and Disputes about the Sense of particular Passages, and the main Scope of some of their Writings, not only between Papists and Protestants, but among the Protestants themselves? How much learned Dust has been often raised among the most learned Men, about the Sense of *Ignatius*'s Bishop, and even the *Genuineness* of his Epistles? And which way should the first Writers attain an Ability of expressing their Sense with so much greater Clearness and Certainty than the inspired Writers? Or is that Supposition *honourable* to the Holy Scriptures? And whereas the Bible was writ for common Use, and may be consulted by every one; the Sense of the Fathers cannot be known to the Generality of Christians, but only by Tradition and the Report of others. And to what Purpose are they sent round about, and lost in a Maze, instead of taking the shortest way, and going directly to the Fountain-Head?

I am free to own, I think the Christian Church has agreed all along in the *Essentials* of Christianity: For how else has it been preserved and continued in Being? 'Tis true, there are difficult Passages in the Scripture, as well as in other Books, and *some things hard to be understood*; perhaps on purpose to employ our Diligence, and exercise our Charity; and in which sober Enquiries and different Apprehensions, are not of such moment to affect the

Essentials

Essentials of Christianity, or disturb the Peace of the Church. What is truly essential to the Christian Doctrine and the Christian Duty, is plainly laid down in the Scripture, and pretty generally agreed among Christians of the several Ways, tho' with many Mixtures and Mistakes, and with different Degrees of Light and Purity, in the several Ages of the Church. And what is not clearly and expressly revealed, and not generally agreed among them, cannot for that Reason be thought absolutely necessary: For it would not agree with the natural Notions of divine Wisdom and Goodness, or the Design and End of a Revelation, to suppose That made necessary by it, which is not *plainly* revealed. I believe Christians are better agreed in the main Points of the Christian Religion, than some Men are willing to apprehend; *i. e.* in the great Articles of Faith and Obedience to the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, and all the Virtues and Duties of the Christian Life. And certainly different Apprehensions about difficult Matters, which are either not revealed to us at all, or very generally express'd, may well stand with being Christians, and with mutual Love; and then no Harm would be done by them. 'Tis Mens proud and imperious *Dictates*; imposing their Sense upon other Men; making things necessary to Church Communion, and brotherly Love, which the Scriptures have not made so, that has occasioned all the Mischief and Disorder in the Christian World.

And after all, there is no such *Agreement* as is pretended, among the Fathers or Councils, in the Interpretation of particular Texts.

I de-

I desire to know where that *General and Uninterrupted Sense of the Christian Church*, about things *hard to be understood*, is to be found. Are there not various and different Interpretations among the Fathers and first Writers? Did they interpret every Text the same way? or were their Interpretations always the most reasonable and judicious, or not sometimes very weak and absurd? Don't they often differ not only from *one another*, but sometimes from *themselves*, at different Times, and in different Parts of their Writings? And how can we depend upon the general Sense of the first Writers, when that has been so various and diverse, and there is no such thing as a *General and Uninterrupted Sense* to be found among them? Let any Man who is curious, only consult Dr. *Whitby*'s *Dissertatio de S. Scripturarum Interpretatione*: I am sorry this learned Person should advance such a Notion at this time of Day, when the wisest Men every where are beginning to quit the Search of sacred Truth from the Writings of the Fathers, and seeking it in the Scriptures themselves.

I add, Where they are agreed together in the Sense of Scripture, 'tis not their *Authority* but their *Reason* which ought to govern. The proper *Evidence* of divine Faith can only be the Ground of a divine Faith, and not the Determinations of Men; for then our *Faith would stand in the Wisdom of Men, and not in the Power of God.* If they represent divine Faith in its proper Light, and support their Sense of Scripture by convincing Reason, no doubt they ought to be regarded; but then 'tis their Reason is submitted to, and not their Authority.

rity. Unless we may say, That an unreasonable Interpretation of Scripture must be admitted merely upon the Credit of their Authority. And tho' a *long Prescription for Truth, supported by the written Testimony of the Church, must be a better Ground for private Christians to rest upon, than any modern Conjectures* *; yet the longest Prescription for *Error*, and the oldest *Mistake* in the World, is not rather to be embrac'd, than modern *Evidence* and Proof. The *Fathers* and *Councils* were as much obliged to govern their own Sentiments by the *Reason* of things, and the Proofs of the Scripture Doctrine, as other Men; and to change and alter their Mind, upon farther Light and Conviction. And 'tis plain in Fact they sometimes did so: I ask, which Sense, in this Case, must be depended upon; for there is the Weight of their Authority to support them both? Nor do we ever find them claiming such an Authority, but constantly appealing to the Scripture Authority.

to be sure it is not.

almost contrary to Scripture, sure

We have indeed the *Testimony* of the Christian Church to the Truth of the Holy Scripture, and 'tis a considerable Circumstance of Credibility; tho' I cannot allow the *Authority of the Scriptures to depend upon the Uninterrupted Sense of the Christian Church* †: For sure the Scriptures are of divine Authority, independently upon the Church's Sense of it; and tho' the Church had never bore such a Testimony, or all the ancient Monuments of the Christian Church were lost. That stands upon its own

* Lupton's *Serm. p.* 37.

† Ibid.

Evidence;

Evidence; the Marks of *Divinity* impreſt upon it, and the external Evidence and Teſtimony of God in Miracles, and Prophecies, &c. of which the Heathen Writers bear Witneſs, as well as the Chriſtian Church. And certainly there is a very great Difference between the Church's being a *Witneſs* * and a *Judge*; though he ſeems ſcarce willing to allow it, and makes them ſo near a-kin. The Church may bear Witneſs to the *Truth of Facts*: That the Scriptures were penned by ſuch Perſons, and had ſuch Confirmation as they pretend; and were always received and owned as the Word of God. The firſt Writers may give us conſiderable Aſſiſtance to underſtand the Language and Expreſſion, and to know the particular Opinions and Cuſtoms which prevail'd in thoſe Days; without being *Judges* of the Senſe of it, or empowered, without any Pretence to Inſpiration or Infallibility, to fix a Meaning upon them, which muſt be depended upon by all who come after them.

Nor would the Danger of running into *Errors* and *Hereſies*, or believing things *falſe* and *contradictory*, be greater in the way of private Judgment, for every Man's attending to the Reaſon of Things, in the Uſe of the beſt Endeavours and Helps; than in depending upon Fathers and Councils: For ſome of the greateſt Errors and Hereſies among Chriſtians have been ſhelter'd under the Authority of the firſt Writers; and have each their proper

* Lupton's *Sermon*, p. 37.

Vouchers to support and countenance them. What a Heap of Quotations has Mr. *Dodwell* thrown together to establish his monstrous Notion of the *Natural Mortality* of the Soul; and Dr. *Hickes*, to prove the *proper Sacrifice* in the Lord's Supper? I only ask farther, Whether the Fathers and Councils are not generally deserted, by the greatest Advocates for their Authority, in several Things, in which they are pretty generally agreed among themselves; as in their Opinion of the *Millenium*, *&c*? And if their Authority does properly oblige, ought it not equally to oblige in every Point?

I made these *Remarks* for my own Use, when I first read the Sermons; if you think they may be of Use to any body else, I freely resign them to your Pleasure; and am,

Apr. 15. 1718. SIR,

Your constant Reader,

and humble Servant.

III. TO

III.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE *Vulgar Prepossessions in Favour of the Bishop of* Bangor, *&c.*

SIR,

THE Occasional Paper, (V. 2. No. 7. p. 3.) in answer to the Objections against *Impartial Liberty*, has this Passage, concerning the different Management of Controversy, between the Bishop of *Bangor* and his Opponents: " It's a good Omen to the " Cause of Liberty, to see what Defenders it " has on the one side, and what sort of Op- " posers on the other. May every Cause I " value be ever so defended and so opposed. " One would think the famous Dispute, be-

" tween *Michael* and the Devil, was fought " over again in the Persons of Men: There " is so much of the *Railing Accusation* on the " one side, and so much of the *Angel* Temper " on the other." You are very much concern'd at this, and remark upon it thus, *No less than* the Angel Temper *on the one side, and that of* Michael's *Adversary on the other, is the State of the Matter that has been set forth to the Publick.* This you call *a flaming and shocking Representation.* Now this to me, Sir, looks like a *Prepossession* in your self, as great as any of those you reflect upon in your Book; and the violent straining of Thought throughout your Performance, made me think you wrote the whole of it under a Prepossession that you could not conceal with all your Art. While what you have singled out to remark upon, is neither *Prepossession*, nor *anger*, nor *flaming*, nor *shocking*.

It is not *Prepossession*, sure, to compare a Bishop to an Angel, after so many Writers for Episcopacy have contended, that Bishops are to be understood by the *Angels of the Churches* in the *Apocalypse*. He is therefore an *Angel* by *Office* at least; and as to his *Temper*, *Qualities* and *Behaviour*, there is no need of *Prepossession* to allow them to be *angelical*. Tho' it looks very much like it in your self, to be uneasy because it is to no purpose to go about to make out the contrary. It's an Instance of Prepossession in you, Sir, to forbid me having the Bishop of *Bangor* in my Thoughts, when I read that Passage *Rev.* ii. *To the Angel of the Church of Ephesus* —— *I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience, and how thou canst*

not

not bear them which are evil; and hast tryed them which say they are Apostles, (pretending to an Apostolical Power, and something more than ever they pretended to) *and are not, and hast found them Lyars*, and hast born, and hast Patience, *and for my Name sake hast labour'd, and hast not fainted.* This is the Angel Temper; the Character agrees hitherto excellently well. And tho' my Lord himself may possibly apply the following Verses in a manner different from what I am about to say; yet, they suggest to me, this Advantage in his Lordship's Character, that he is actually doing what the *Angel of Ephesus* was commanded; *viz.* he is *returning to his first Love*, and would feign carry the World along with him, back again to their *Bibles*; to *Jesus the King of his Church*, from whom they have gone a whoring after the Fancies, Doctrines, and *Commandments of Men.* He *remembers from whence he was fallen, and repents, and does the first Works*; brings back the *Bible* Religion, and the *Reformation* Doctrine: Is not this *angelical*?

Dear Sir, how can you call Prepossession, *in Favour of the Bishop of* Bangor, *vulgar*? You know the vulgar Clergy, and the vulgar People, are *prepossessed against him.* Were you never at any of the Evening Lectures, or Charity Sermons about this City, where the Burthen of the Song is, *down with the Bishop of* Bangor? The People go away with dismal Apprehensions of him, instead of *Prepossessions* in his Favour. Have we not been authentickly informed, that *Cursed be they who do the Work of the Lord negligently*, was made the Warrant for railing, and reviling the best of Men *?

Men *? Have you never heard him damned from the *Ale-Bench*, and *anathemized* from the Pulpit, with one and the *same Spirit?* The Mob are turned another way, and every where spirited against him. He is the Hatred of all the ambitious, the proud, the tyrannical Affecters of *Church Power* and *English Popery*, among the *great Vulgar*, and the Little.

I can furnish you with such a Collection of railing Accusations, as will justify the Allusion made to the famous Contest between *Michael and the Devil*; and abundantly show, that there's nothing in that Comparison so *flaming*, or *shocking*, as it is, to see you labouring, by all the Strains of Thought, and Artifice of Language, to screw the Mind of the Reader into some Imagination, that those just Resentments which Honour, Charity, and common Sense, would inspire, to see a brave Man abused by the basest Arts, and the foulest Language, are all but Prepossessions in Favour of the Bishop of *Bangor*.

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* *The Reverend Mr.* Lamb's *Account of the Charity-School Sermon at* Cree Church.

The

The Author of this Paper having sent a Letter to Mr. *de la Pillonniere*, to request his Leave for the publishing of a Letter writ to him, by Mr. *Mather* in *New England*; Mr. *de la Pillonniere* was pleas'd to send the following Answer.

IV.

To the Author of the Occasional Paper.

SIR,

AS I know that Mr. *Cotton Mather*'s Letter hath already done some Good, by being handed about in Writing; and as I am very desirous that the good Spirit which is in it should spread yet farther, I cannnot but be very willing to see it printed. I am the more so, because I shall reckon it a great Honour, to have my Name in such a valuable Book as yours is; and to appear there, as a Lover of that Catholick Temper, which you encourage so much, by your free, ingenious, and Christian Writings. It will be also a Piece of Justice to my honoured Friend, to make him known for the Man he is,

is, here in *England*; and perhaps his Example will sway with many; especially of his own Brethren, and inspire them with the same truly Christian and Protestant Spirit. I conclude, from your Letter, that you have a Copy of his. If you have it not, the Original shall be at your Service. I am,

SIR,

Your most humble, and

most obedient Servant,

De la Pillonniere.

Streatham,
August the *6th.*

V. To

V.

To my much Honoured

Mr. *Francis De la Pillonniere.*

SIR, Boston, New England, *Nov.* 5. 1717.

YOUR very Generous and Victorious *Answer to an Accusation* of an unreasonable Adversary, has reached unto *America*, and been an acceptable Entertainment unto the Servants of God here, who have been favoured with such right Sentiments of *Reformed Christianity*, as His Grace has, to our Joy, enlightned you withal.

The Pleasure that we have taken to behold your Arrival, and Adherence to those Principles, which alone assert the Just Liberties of Mankind, and which are absolutely necessary to the introducing and establishing of *Genuine Christianity* in the World, has had some Alloy in the Trouble, wherewith we have been sensibly touched, by the base Treats of a snappish Writer, whom his Protestant Profession is very little indebted to.

But, the ſame Grace, that has given you ſo clear an Underſtanding of a Religion, entirely calculated for the Benefit and Bleſſedneſs of Mankind, will alſo fortify you againſt the Scandals which may be offered you by Men of corrupt Minds, who proſtitute that Holy Religion unto indirect Intentions, which the Glorious Author of it never propoſed. And you will not think the worſe of it, becauſe Men of carnal Minds would make it the Engine of their Carnality.

The Truth is, the Reformation that came on, when the *Romiſh Antichriſt* had paſs'd thro' his Time, and his *Two Times*, and was entering into his *Half-Time*, was little better than an *Half-Reformation*.

The Reforming Churches, flying from *Rome*, carried, ſome of them more, ſome of them leſs, all of them ſomething, of *Rome*, with them; eſpecially in that Spirit of *Impoſition*, and *Perſecution*, which has too much cleaved unto them ALL.

The Period haſtens for a *New Reformation*; wherein 'tis likely that our holy Lord will, in ſome Degree, reject ALL the *Parties* of Chriſtians at this Day in the World; and form a NEW PEOPLE of the good Men in the *ſeveral Parties*, who ſhall unite in the Articles of their Goodneſs, and ſweetly bear with one another in their leſſer Differences; leaving each other to the Divine Illuminations.

PIETY will anon be the only *Baſis of Union*, in the Churches of the revived, refined, reformed Reformation; and pious Men, in ſeveral Forms, will come to love, and live, as Brethren; and the purged Floor of our Savi-

our

our will be visited with Tokens of his Presence, that shall be very comfortable.

It is thus very much in my Country; and therefore, Sir, if *Old England* prove too torrid a Climate for you, come over to *New England*, where I will do my best, that you shall be treated with more Christian Civilities.

But I hope that our Lord will find greater Employments for you in *Europe*, than can be expected on the Western Side of the *Atlantick*. He has qualifyed you for them, and, I hope, what you have seen among some very *Defective Protestants* will animate you to them.

Being my self a *Calvinist*, I must needs differ pretty much from a Gentleman who professes himself an *Arminian*. But I consider what those *Maxims of Piety* are, which engage the *Arminian* to maintain his distinguishing Positions. Those Maxims are, *That* the Holy and Sin-hating Lord must not be reproach'd as the Impeller of the Sin, whereof he is the *Revenger*: *That* our Merciful Father must not be blasphemed, as if He dealt after an illusory manner with Men, when He invites them to His Mercy: *That* none, among the Fallen Race of the *First Adam*, are to be shut out from the Hopes of Life, in the Death of the *Second Adam*; *That* impenitent Unbelievers must not cast on God the Blame of their Unbelief; but the Wicked must lay wholly on themselves the Fault of their own Destruction: And, *That* Men must work out their own Salvation with as much Industry, and Agony, and Vigilancy, as if all turned upon their

own Will and Care, whether they shall be saved, or no. Now, these are *Maxims*, which every pious *Calvinist* will also most heartily consent unto. And, if I should repeat the *Maxims of Piety*, which make me fall in with the Position of a *Calvinist*, as requisite unto the supporting of them, I am confident the pious Mr. *de la Pillonniere* would most heartily subscribe unto them. And we shall both of us have the Modesty to confess, that we have also to do with Matters which are to us incomprehensible. Now, if good Men are so united in the *Maxims*, which are the END, for the serving whereof they declare that they pursue their Controversies; why should not this *Uniting Piety* put an End unto their Controversies? and beat *their Swords into Plough-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks?*

'Tis under the Power of such Apprehensions, that I take the Freedom of tendering to you two or three *American* Composures, (of the some Hundreds, on various Arguments, and in various Languages,) which this mean Hand has published.

My Aim is, to let you see how the Pure, Christian, Protestant, Religion is preached, and lived, in our Western World. But I will acknowledge that I have also a farther Aim, which is to request of you, that the little thing entituled, LAPIS è MONTE EXCISUS, may by your Hand be thrown over into *France*. Unto which Request I am emboldened, by a strong Persuasion, that it contains the Religion, which you will count it your Glory to be an Instrument of propagating in the World.

My

My Letter, and my Design, is now finished: And I have no more to do, but subscribe, with very great Respect,

SIR,

Your hearty Brother, and

most humble Servant,

Cotton Mather.

FINIS.

The TITLES *of all the foregoing Papers.*

Vol. I.

NUMB. I. An Essay on Bigotry.

Numb. II. The Character of a Protestant.

Numb. III. Protestant Principles concerning Civil Government, *&c.*

Numb. IV. An Expedient for Peace among all Protestants.

Numb. V. The Excellence of Vertue appearing in a Publick Character.

Numb. VI. The Danger of the Church considered.

Numb. VII. The Nature and Obligation of Oaths.

Numb. VIII. Letters to the Author.

Numb. IX. Of Censure.

Numb. X. An Expedient for Peace among all Protestants. *Part II.*

Numb. XI. The Danger of the Constitution consider'd.

Numb. XII. Remarks on a Pamphlet, entituled, *The Church of* England *the sole Encourager of Free-Thinking*, &c.

Vol.

Vol. II.

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Numb. II. Letters to the Author.
Numb. III. Of Plots.
Numb. IV. Of removing the Incapacities of Diſſenters.
Numb. V. Of Political Friendſhip.
Numb. VI. Of Acts of Grace.
Numb. VII. The Pretenſions for an abſolute Power of the Church conſidered: Being an Anſwer to ſome of the moſt conſiderable Objections againſt impartial Liberty.
Numb. VIII. Of Reputation. An Eſſay, occaſioned by the Controverſy between the Lord Biſhop of *Bangor*, and his Oppoſers.
Numb. IX. Of Societies for Reformation of Manners, with an Addreſs to Magiſtrates.
Numb. X. An Addreſs to the Clergy, in Relation to the Societies for Reformation of Manners.
Numb. XI. Letters to the Author.
Numb. XII. An Eſſay on the Pride of Authors.

Vol. III.

NUMB. I. Of Retractations.
Numb. II. Of Bugbears.
Numb. III. Containing two Letters: One to the Reverend Dr. *Prideaux*; another to the Author of this Paper.

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ANY kind of Letters, Essays, Extracts out of valuable Authors, or Intelligence of any Affairs which may serve the first declared Intention of this Paper, will be thankfully received, if directed to the *Author of the Occasional Paper*, to be left at *North*'s Coffee-house, *Kings-street*, near *Guild-hall*, *London*, Post paid.

THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. V.

Of the ABUSE *of*

LIBERTY.

——Sed in Vitium Libertas excidit, & Vim Dignam Lege regi.——

Hor. Ar. Poet.

Namque cepere Nobilitas Dignitatem, Populus Libertatem in Lubidinem vertere, sibi quisque ducere, trahere, rapere; ita Omnia in duas Parteis abstracta sunt: Resp. quæ media fuerat, dilacerata.

Sallustii Bellum Jugur.

LONDON:

Printed for EM. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*; J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*; J HARRISON, under the *Royal Exchange*; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*. MDCCXVIII.

OF THE

ABUSE of LIBERTY.

THE *Author* of this *Paper* has, at several Times, pleaded for the Just Liberty of Men, and Christians. And whilst He has honestly and sincerely, used his own Endeavours, to promote so good a Cause; He is pleas'd to find, his Correspondents concur with Him; and come in to yield him such Assistance, in so laudable an Undertaking, as appears by their several *Letters*, which He has lately communicated to the Publick. As He is Conscious of his *own Integrity*, He values not the Censures of a narrow Soul, or a peevish Temper. They may disturb Themselves, but can make no Impressions on Him.

Yet, He thinks it a Respect due to his *Readers*, to let them know, (that He may not be mistaken by Them to their own Prejudice;) That the *Liberty* He would assert, and is Desirous to promote, is only such as is Reasonable, and Just, and Christian; And will well consist with whatever the Reason of Things,

the Rights of Mankind, the Welfare and Peace of Society, or the Obligations of Christianity, require. He would never encourage any Thing, whatsoever, that passes these Bounds. And He hopes no Principles He has advanc'd, or maintain'd, do so. The Liberty he has pleaded for, is such a Fair Impartial Liberty, that it would no more break in upon the Rights of other Men, than it would willingly suffer in its Own: No more hurt or destroy good Government, than it would be injur'd, oppress'd, or ruin'd by Tyranny. The Liberty he has pleaded for in Religion, is such only, as is allowed by God, and Nature; and consists well with the Obligations of Religion in general, and of Christianity in particular. It is not a *Licence* to trample on all Religion; to sport with *Christian Revelation*, or any of the Sacred Doctrines taught by it. It is a Liberty indeed, to examine with Care, the Opinions in Religion which a Man embraces: To believe Nothing, but upon Evidence; and to profess Nothing, but what a Man believes. Yet, it is not a Liberty to indulge a wanton Curiosity; to affect singular Notions; to decry receiv'd Opinions, meerly out of Pride, or Humour, or any other such unreasonable Passions or Motives.

'Tis true, an Inhumane, Unchristian, Tyrannical Spirit, deserves the severest Censure: That would force all Men, to understand Scripture, in the same Sense; or profess an Agreement, where there is none; or else will excommunicate, curse, and damn Men; and, where it has Power, persecute and destroy them. This has too much of the Pride and Cruelty

of

of the Great [illegible]y of Mankind, to be any ways Counten[illegible] by the Meek *Jesus*, the *Prince of Peace*. He who receives the *Bible*, as a Divine Revelation; and uses his best Endeavours, to understand its True Meaning; cannot be either an *Heretick*, or a *Schismatick*, if He endeavours sincerely to make it the Rule of his Belief, and Practice. For no Man has a Right to tell Another, that He does not understand the Scriptures unless he puts his Meaning upon Them. The most Important Truths of Christianity have Difficulties in Them, which may leave Room for Diversity of Opinion, where Men are not of Assuming Humours, or Furious Tempers. To raise, on all Occasions, the Cry of *Heresy*; to call out for the Help of *Ecclesiastical* Thunders, or the *Secular* Arm; is not likely, either to confute Heresies, or keep the Peace of the Church. A Liberty, in a Peaceable and modest Manner, to follow a Mans *own* Convictions, tho' He should dissent from *Established Faith* and *Forms*; together with an Endeavour to recover Him from his Errors, by sound Arguments and kind Usage; is the only Christian Method, and the most likely to succeed.

But where this Liberty is allowed, it is reasonable there should be a Care not to *abuse* it. A Liberty of Dissent, does certainly include in it, a Liberty to shew a Reason for it. A Man may, then, set his own Opinions in the best Light, and support Them with the strongest Arguments, He can. He may, as plainly as He can, lay open the Weakness or Absurdity of the Opposite Arguments and Opinions. So far is reasonable. But it is unreasonable to

use

use hard Words, or reproachful Terms; to manage the Difference, with an Air of Insolence, or Scorn: This looks too like a Fondness for that *Authority*, which the Liberty He claims, disowns. They, who insolently trample upon Authority, when it is *against* Them; are likely to stretch it beyond Bounds, or exercise it with Rigour, if ever They get it into their *own Hands*.

There is, moreover, a *Decency* to be used in Things sacred. Where there are Manifest and Important Difficulties on either Side of a Question, there is no Room for indecent Levity and Mirth. To turn a serious Matter into a Jest, may provoke, but can never convince. Modesty is the only *Decorum* in such Matters: For Banter and Ridicule have, at least the Appearance, of the highest Arrogance; and are no more within the Protection of Liberty, than Rudeness and ill Manners, are within the Civil Freedoms of Conversation.

The Liberty of *thinking* for a Man's Self, was never intended to patronize, a Liberty of acting *without Thought*, or changing Sentiments in haste; especially in Articles of Importance, where the greatest Consideration is requir'd. This is to retain the Glorious *Name* of Liberty: But to hide under it, an Intemperate *Licentiousness* of Thought, and Actions: Or, to speak more properly, to bring Themselves into the vilest Servitude; the Servitude of some Weak Passion, or Wicked Lust. Thus some of the *Philosophick Libertines*, by assuming the Name of *Free-Thinkers*, have prophaned it. They have, it may be, observ'd some Ambitious Men, (whose sacred Office should have taught

Them

Them better Things,) make Tools of the People, to serve their own Worldly Designs: And therefore, They take the Liberty to advance the most shocking Paradoxes; to laugh at *Revelation*, and vacate all the Bonds and Ties even of *Natural Religion*; and turn the whole Race of Men, into Brutes, (tho' they put in themselves for Company) by taking away all Liberty of Choice, and Action. And what is all this Modest, Mannerly, Treatment of Mankind, for? To pass Themselves upon the World, for Persons of Extraordinary Abilities, and Uncommon Attainments. Thus, Many who could make no considerable Figure in the plain Way of Common Opinions, and would be lost there in a Crowd, step out of it meerly to shew Themselves, and be observ'd. Hence, if any Thing comes recommended to Them, by its Novelty or Strangeness, They receive it without farther Consideration: Not regarding how far it subverts the Peace of Societies, and the Foundations of all Honesty and Goodness among Men. Yet will They miscall this, a Freedom from Prejudices, and using the Liberty of their Own Judgments; tho' the Opinions They entertain, have all the Marks of Rashness, and Inadvertency. A late Ingenious Author, (himself a noted Free-Thinker) has however given Us this true Account of many of Them. * "If They want a "true *Israelitish* Faith, They can make amends "by a *Chinese* or *Indian* One. If they are "short in *Syria* or *Palestine*, They have their "full

* *Advice to an Author*, p. 179.

" full Measure in *America*, or *Japan*. — Tho' " *Christian* Miracles may not so well satisfy " Them; They dwell, with the highest Con- " tentment, on the Prodigies of *Moorish* or *Pa-* " *gan* Countries.

With the same Abuse of Liberty, *Old Errors* in Religion, which have long since been forgotten, are revived, or *New Ones* started. These are fondly embraced, and zealously propagated, not because They any way improve the Understanding, but gratify a Vain Curiosity. It looks as if such Men had a *great Mind* to be *Hereticks*, Who receive and maintain Opinions, for no other apparent Reason, but, to confound Themselves, and disturb Others.

Least of all, does, a Claim of Just and Reasonable Liberty, give any Protection to a Turbulent Seditious Behaviour. It is more consistent with it Self, than to serve the Cause— of *Passive Obedience*, by *libelling* and defaming a Government; — or of *Nonresistance*, by Routs and *Riots*. It must sure be an *Unreasonable Licence*, that disturbs every Man's Liberty; by sowing *Faction*, spreading *Discontent*, and overturning all the *Security* any Man has for the continuance of his Liberty; That is, destroying the *Peace* and Good Order of the *Society* in which he lives. How little soever these Excesses, have to do with just Liberty, We may yet observe, Men are very apt to run into Them. It is a Point of Wisdom not easily attain'd, to keep in the Mean, and avoid all Extremes. History gives Us plentiful Instances, of some, who, to avoid the Mischiefs of *Anarchy*, have contentedly put on the Chains of *Slavery*: And of Others, Who have been so affrighted

affrighted with Tyranny, that They have outrun all the Bounds of Liberty, into Tumult and Confusion. When Men are both in a Fright and in a Passion, 'tis no great Wonder they either mistake their Way, or are carried too far. Besides, that it is natural for Men, when They are flying from Mischiefs, the Smart of which They yet feel, to be sure they fly far enough. They are also too often apt to indulge an Indiscreet Revenge. In which, tho' They may intend only Harm, or Destruction, to the Lawless Power that oppress'd them; yet they may, in Effect, revenge the Tyranny of Others, on Themselves; by falling into Evils, near as great, as those They endeavour to avoid. And as long as there is so much Weakness, and Passion, in Humane Nature; as long as Oppression is like to make even a Wise Man mad; this must, I fear, be still reckon'd among some of the Many Evils of Tyrannical and Oppressive Power. But it must be own'd, there are many other bad *Motives* to lead Men into these Licentious Excesses, to the great Discredit of a Just and Glorious Cause.

Pride is a Common and natural Vice. And as Men are apt to conceive an high Opinion of One that thinks out of the Common Way; it is a mighty Temptation, to find out such Opinions, in Order to obtain the so much desired Character, of a *Fort Esprit*; As the *French* call a *Free-Thinker*. This Itch after a distinguish'd Fame, for Uncommon Knowledge and Penetration, betrays Many, not only into very Weak and Silly Opinions, but also into very Mischievous Notions, if They have only the Recommendation of Novelty. The Philoso-

phical Genius of *Athens*, once the Standard of Good Sense and Learning both for *Greece* and *Rome*, degenerated, in Time, to this Pride and Vanity. They spent their Time, in Nothing else, but searching for some *New Thing*. And as this Humour prevails in Other Nations, and among the Professors of a better Religion, it must carry them beyond a just Liberty of thinking, into the licentious Extravagance of advancing Paradoxes, the sooner to arrive at the Reputation of *Free-Thinkers*.

Acts 17.

There are, moreover, too Many by their *Vices*, Enemies to true Liberty; and Friends only to Licentiousness. Even what they mean by Liberty, is, to abuse and injure Others; to commit all the Extravagant Actions with Impunity, that Lust, or Revenge, or a Rakish Humour, shall prompt them to. No wonder such Persons abuse all Parts of Liberty, and exceed all Reasonable Bounds; When They are equally unrestrain'd, by the Authority, and even the Penalties, of Laws themselves. As They have no Value for Liberty on any *Good* Account; and seem only Friends to it, as they hope They may make some Advantage of it, to protect them in their Libertine Actions; So the only Use They have for it, is, to abuse it. And as long as the World is stockt, with so great a Number of these Persons, it must expect Examples of such like Abuses.

Too near akin to these, are some others; who, with all their Pretences to Liberty, have a Passion for Power, and Dominion, in their Own Hands. They would be free from all Authority of others over Them, that there may be Nothing to hinder Their Usurpation

of Authority over their Neighbours. They would have all Things on a Level, that they may have the fairer Scuffle for Tyranny. Such Men, (sure with a very wicked Design,) run Liberty into Confusion; That, when Men are sufficiently tired with the Evils of *Anarchy*, They may fall in with *their* Measures of *Remedy*: Which are sure to end, in a *lawless Authority*, over All that are Subject to them.

To these We may add, the most mischievous of all Passions, an *intriguing Ambition*. A restless Spirit, that can never rise in Peacefull and orderly Times; Or, has so ill deserv'd of a Government, as justly to despair of Favour from it. Has its last Hopes, on throwing all Things into Confusion; and in a cursed Ability of doing Mischief. Liberty is a darling Name, and specious Pretence. They know how to fire the Multitude by it. And, use all Arts to run them into those Extravagancies, that only can serve their Ends. Even *Catiline* himself, the Pest of his Country, could animate his Associates, in conspiring the Ruin of the *Roman Common-wealth*, with the sacred Name of *Liberty*; tho' there hardly ever was, a viler or more impious Abuse of it. * " I am

 " daily

* Cæterum mihi indies magis Animus accenditur, cum considero quæ Conditio Vitæ futura sit, nisi nos metipsos vindicamus in libertatem. nam postquam Resp. in Paucorum Potentium Jus atq; Ditionem concessit, semper illis Reges, Tetrarchæ Vectigales esse, Populi, Nationes Stipendia pendere. Cæteri Omnes, Strenui, Boni, Nobiles atque Ignobiles, Vulgus fuimus, sine Gratia, sine Auctoritate, his Obnoxii, quibus, si Resp. valeret, formidini essemus.

" daily more fir'd, (*said that designing, ambi-*
" *tious Traitor*) when I consider what our fu-
" ture Condition of Life must be; unless We
" vindicate our own Liberty. For since the
" whole Authority of the Common-wealth, is
" fallen into the Hands of a few Powerful
" Men; They have Tribute from Kings and
" Princes; Pensions from whole Countries,
" and Nations. But Every Body else, whe-
" ther Brave, or Good, Noble or Ignoble, are
" treated as a rude Multitude, without Fa-
" vour, without Authority, and Slaves to
" them, to whom They would be a Terror,
" if the Common-wealth was in a Good
" State. *And afterwards*, Why then do You
" not rouze Your Selves? You see before You,
" that Liberty, you have so often wished for."
A Method, this, too successfully follow'd, by many Other *such Patrons* of Liberty as *Catiline* was.

These, 'tis certain are very bad Effects, of a very Good Cause. For the best Things in the World, are capable of being abused, by bad Men. But the Remedy, some *Quack Politicians* would advise Us to, by taking away all Just and Reasonable Liberty, is a great deal Worse than the Disease.

Whenever Liberty is abused, it is the Abuse of an Excellent Thing. But Restraint of Just Liberty, is it Self, and in its own Nature, an Abuse of *All* that is Sacred, and Reasonable. With Liberty, People *may* be in the Wrong: But

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* Quin igitur Expergiscimini? En illa, illa, quam sæpe optastis, Libertas. *Sallustii Bellum Catilinarium.*

But under Restraint, for the Most Part, They *must* be so. A Man at Liberty, *may* be in the Right, if He will Himself: But that He *often cannot* be, tho' never so fully convinc'd of the Truth, where Submission to meer Authority is enforced. Liberty always gives that Advantage to Truth, and Evidence, which it ought to have; But Restraint is equally beneficial to Error; Nay more so, as the Powers to restrain are more Numerous on the Side of Error, and Error less able to subsist, where there is an Impartial Freedom of Enquiry. If Men judge for Themselves, They can deceive none but Themselves: But when Millions of People must be determined by One, or a few, the Error may grow Epidemical. In Submission to meer Authority, Men must believe, (or pretend at least to believe,) whatever is delivered to Them, tho' never so Ridiculous or Absurd; If any Thing can be called Ridiculous, and Absurd, after such Submission. For on this Foot, *Transubstantiation*, Worshipping the *Host*, *Infallibility*, or any Thing else that shall appear for the *Good* of the *Church*, (by which the Interest of the Clergy too often is meant,) must be submitted to. Private Judgment is not permitted to discover the Absurdity: No, tho' it be so plain, as to discover it Self. This can only be the Policy of a false Church. None but a false Religion can need it, or should allow it.

In a State of just Liberty, Some Persons may, possibly, broach Errors: But then, 'tis free for Every One to confute those Errors, and establish the Truth. Besides, if Liberty may give Occasion to *broach* Error; Force *establishes*

Ifies it, and makes it Lasting: Sets the *Bible* upon a Level with the *Alcoran*, the *Council* of *Trent* above the *College* of *Apostles*; and vindicates the *Non Obstante* of the *Council of Constance*, in taking away the *Cup* from the *Laity*. It will not allow Men to judge, whether Christ bid Them drink of it or no: Nay, which is More, it will not allow them to judge, whether They may drink of it, *tho'* Christ has commanded it; if, with a *Non Obstante* to the Commands of Christ, the Council forbids it.

Farther; upon this Scheme, no Church can long continue the Church of Christ. For as soon as ever the Government of it is got into the Hands of bad Men; as, in the changeable Course of Things it may likely happen; the Church must then be a Company of Fools or Knaves, Tyrants on the One Hand, and Hypocrites on the Other.

Suppose then, Liberty does sometimes end in Licentiousness; Liberty does not force any One, either into that, or Error. The Consequence is not Natural, but Accidental. It arises not from Liberty it Self, but from Something else. When Force and Absolute Authority have a necessary Connection with Injustice and Hypocrisy, They reward Hypocrisy with Preferment, which deserves much rather the Lash; and punish Sincerity, with Misery and Torments, which is the Thing in Religion most Valuable, and Amiable in the Sight, both of God, and Man. The Hypocrite can turn to any Thing: The Worst of Men may become most forward, and Clamorous, for the Profession that is in Fashion. The Sincere Person in the Mean Time, is under all Disadvantages,

tages, and of all Men most Miserable. But has God given his Ministers Power to make Him so? And to make him so, because He loves and fears his God *sincerely*?

Without a Liberty to obey GOD rather than *Man*, our *Reformation*, from the Church of *Rome*, cannot be justified. *Christ* and his *Apostles* would be, Themselves, Offenders; and *Christianity*, it Self, an Innovation. Liberty, 'tis said, disturbs the *Peace* of the *Church*; and leaves a Gap open for *Heresy*, and *Schism*. As if there could be any Heresy worse, than *Persecution*. Liberty, is so far from being the *Cause* of Schisms, that it is the most proper *Cure* for Them; to be sure, for all those, that arise from the *Want* of it. Blind Submission, 'tis true, may yield a lazy Quiet to the *Ecclesiasticks*. When they have hang'd or burnt one Part, and have the other under their Girdle; there may be Peace every where, ——but in the *Consciences* of Them that *think*. Yet if this should be called the *Peace* of the *Church*, 'tis fitting to observe of it; That it stands in Opposition to *Honesty*, *Truth*, *Goodness*, and *Sincerity*. * Now, is it not a goodly Peace, that Discourages all Search after Truth; and all Endeavours after Improvement; lest a Man should *think* Himself into *Trouble*? They have *Moses and the Prophets*, says CHRIST, let Them hear Them; But, on this Scheme, there would be no Need *to* hear Them, or Any Body, besides Those——to whose Authority They must submit.

* Dulce quidem est Nomen Pacis (*says* Hilarius.) Sed aliud est Pax, aliud Servitus.

submit. Let the Gentlemen of this Opinion, once speak fairly out, and their Meaning will appear to be this; The best Way to prevent *Heresy* and *Schism*, is to prevent *thinking*. For what need has Any Man, to think for himself, when others are appointed to think for Him?

The Natural Consequence of this, must be, to hinder the Increase of Knowledge, and the Propagation of Truth. Dr. *Geddes* has historically demonstrated, that all *Spain* had been Protestants in *Charles* the V*ths* Time, if it had not been for the *Inquisition*; as is acknowledged by the *Spaniards* Themselves. So effectually, do these Measures prevent, the Possibility of a Reformation. Restraint of Just Liberty, is indeed, the Greatest *Sacrilege* in the World. It robs God of his Honour; and the Souls of Men of their Peace, in this World, and their Reward, in the Next. A Sacrilege, in Comparison of which, the Robbery of Churches, is but as a Rent in a Man's Coat, to a Wound in his Flesh. It not only puts Ignorance and Knowledge on a Level; but even requires, that a Man of Grace and Goodness, of Learning and Knowledge, should submit to One that has neither: And contrary to Grace, Goodness, and Conscience, he must yield to what a Company of Blockheads it may be, have determined 500 Years ago. What thus equals every Thing, and is equally a Reason for every Thing, must needs be absurd. For Persons to erect, for Themselves, by Themselves, a Jurisdiction; and determine for Themselves, by Themselves, just as they please; must needs be *Unreasonable*: And, when it is in Opposition to Divine Authority,

it

it must be *Diabolical.* It is in the Church, what *Lucifer* was in Heaven; who first set up for Will and Pleasure, against the Will of God. When such Authority is once established, it supersedes all other Means of Grace; It makes Praying, and Reading, and all other Methods of Instruction, and Improvement, and indeed every Thing, Needless, but — Submission to such Authority. If God has a Right to a Conscientious Regard, can he then give an Authority to overrule Conscience? That is, an Authority against himself? In a Word; there can be no Heresy, or Schism, or any other supposed evil Consequence of Liberty, equal to the Wickedness and Vileness, of such Lawless Force. For it is a Sin against God, and Nature; against Reason, and Revelation; against the Common Sense of Men, as well as against the Conscience of Christians, and the Word of God.

However, tho' it may thus appear, there is no Comparison, between the Mischiefs of Restraint and Coercion, on one Hand; and the Evils imputed to Liberty, and sometimes accidentally arising from it on the other; when They are truly and justly ballanced: Yet it is certain, the Abuse of Liberty is attended with many Evils and Mischiefs, which, Every Wise and Good Man should carefully endeavour to prevent. Such Care, is not to be expected, from the Vitious Enemies of True Liberty; or from Persons, who designedly abuse it, to gratify their own intriguing Ambition, or Lust of Power. Such Passions and Vices, are usually too Headstrong, to be directed by any Counsels of Prudence or Reason. Yet it may be

hoped, They, who have a true Sense of Liberty, and a Love for so glorious a Cause, must be desirous to avoid the Manifest *Mischiefs* their Abuse of it will be attended with; Whether that Abuse proceeds from their Weak Compliance with the ill Designs of others, or from their own Humour and Vanity.

For, in Truth, an Abuse of Liberty is most commonly a very great Disservice to the Persons themselves that abuse it. An *Author* of valuable Abilities, in other Respects, and whose Performances would be receiv'd by the World with Esteem, and gain Him a Reputation if he observ'd the Rules of Decorum, runs a great Hazard of losing *all* Reputation by indulging *indecent Scurrilities*. He might, likely, be capable of great Service to the World, if He would go no farther in his Assertions, than what He had Good Reasons to support: But He shall absolutely lose all Regard to Himself, and the Useful Truths He maintains, by blending some Extravagant Opinion with Them, which he cannot maintain; or shewing a Fondness for a *Paradox*, his Reader is not able to bear. These may, likely, lose Him all he aimed at, by his Novelties, and Singularity. Instead of finding the World, dispos'd to gratify Him, with the Reputation of Uncommon Judgment and Penetration; He may be mortified with the Character He is most of all afraid of, and would avoid, even of *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*. And This, not only by an Unthinking, Ignorant Multitude; but also by the Wisest, and most Judicious, Men of their Time. Instead of the Name, and Applause they expect; They may, likely meet with,

with, as just and smart a Reproach, as *Cicero* gave to some such Persons in his Time; Who would find an *Hypothesis* to explain how the *Pythian* Oracle, tho' supposed Divine, came to cease. * "I cannot understand these Philosophers, who are so Superstitious, and almost "Fanatical, that they had rather do any "Thing than not shew their own Folly." More especially, if their Paradoxes tend to subvert the Foundations of moral Good; and therewith, the Peace and Happiness of all Mankind; They may justly fear a Return of Severer Reflections. It was well observed in Answer to One of this kind of Authors: † "Too great an Assurance in Arguments of "this Nature (asserting Notions, that if They "should prove True, would manifestly subvert "the very Essences of Good and Evil) rejoycing "in the Strength of Them, and taking Pleasure in the Carrying of such a Cause, is what "a Good Mind can never be capable of." So that when They are hunting after an Uncommon Fame, They may thus chance to lose not only the Reputation of their Understanding, but of their Prudence and Honesty too.

As to Licentiousness of *Practice*, it may be sufficient to take Notice; That it generally defeats its Own End. A Man has less Pleasure, and Relish, in the Enjoyments of Life He so much values, by an Intemperate Use of

* Nescio quomodo isti Philosophi, Superstitiosi, & pæne Fanatici, quidvis malle videntur quam se non Ineptos. *De Divin.* L. 2. c. 57.

† *Answer to a Philosophical Enquiry concerning Humane Liberty.*

Them, and the Extravagant Liberty He allows Himself, than another who keeps himself within the Bounds of Reason and Nature.

When a Man cannot be content quietly to enjoy his Own Liberty of Opinion, and to go on in his Own Way, with a Modest Behaviour; but will insult his Superiours, be Rude to those of other Sentiments, and perpetually put his *Nostrums* upon every Body in Conversation; 'tis odds, but he soon comes under, a Restraint he little thinks of Even to be denyed those Measures of Liberty, which He had before. For such ill Returns to Reasonable Liberty, must be very provoking. The *sacred History* acquaints Us, what was the Effect of our *first Parents* transgressing the fair Bounds of Liberty God gave them; when They coveted to taste of the Fruit, of that only Tree, that was forbidden. Some like Consequences must be expected, even under the mildest Government among Men. If People cannot be content, to enjoy peaceably, the Privileges of their Country, and the Possession of what is their Own; but will be dabling in Politicks, dictating to their Superiours, and libelling a Government; how long soever the Patience of a Government may last, such Turbulent People must, one Time, or other, expect to feel its Resentment of such Usage: And have only Themselves to thank, if They are, at length, cramp'd in those Liberties, They would otherwise have a Right to.

There is another Consequence, of this Abuse, extremely pernicious: The Scandal, and Disgrace, it will unavoidably cast, on Just Liberty. It is what gives the main Support and Coun-

Countenance, to the Enemies of it. Without such a Handle as this, They would have no tolerable Pretence of Clamour. A Licentious Freedom, gives them all the Advantages, They wish for. This supports the popular Cry against Freedom; And not only the *Common People*, are hereby led into Prejudices against it; but *Governors* themselves, have been sometimes forced to use, more violent Measures, than They would otherwise have done, to suppress it. Even the very Friends of Liberty, have been often shocked by it; and have been induced to concur too far, with the Enemies of it; and do too much, of their Work, for them. As it is the Common Case of *Extremes*, when Men smart with the Evils of *One*, They are wont inconsiderately to run into the *Other*. Indeed, there is hardly any other Account to be given, how it comes to pass, that any honest and Generous Minds should stand up against the Civil and Religious Rights of Mankind; and give in to the Support of Tyranny either in Church or State, but This: That They have been shocked, with the many real Excesses They have seen some run into, and the Stories They have heard, possibly more than are True, of Others.

Thus Licentious People, do not only hurt Themselves, but involve a Thousand innocent and peaceable People in unjust Restraints, for the sake of their own ill Conduct. It was therefore wisely argued by the aforementioned *Author*; "All sincere Lovers of Truth and Liber-
" ty, of free and impartial Examination, are
" under the highest Obligations, in Reason
" and Conscience, always to make use of that
" Free-

" Freedom, which we so greatly esteem, and " so justly boast of, in such a Manner only, as " may give no Occasion to superstitious Men, " and Lovers of Darkness, to endeavour to re- " trench that Liberty of enquiring after Truth, " upon which all valuable Knowledge, and all " true Religion essentially depends." It may hardly deserve a further Remark, that such licentious Abuse of Liberty, does often make Way for a general Corruption of Manners, and Dissolution of all Order, Ruin of Peace, and therewith of Liberty it self. These are Evils so sensibly evident, they will be sadly felt, whenever they are introduced by it. And it will be but a miserable Consolation for Any, when they come to feel them, that they did not foresee such bad Consequences, when they were so easy to be foreseen; or that they did not intend them, when they tamely suffered themselves to be made the Tools of other Mens Pride, Ambition, or Revenge.

One might be apt to wonder, how it comes to pass, Men are so inclinable to run into these licentious Excesses, from whence they may reasonably expect such pernicious Consequences. It may serve further to encrease our Wonder, if we also consider, how plain and equitable the Means are, that would effectually prevent it.

As to *Civil Liberty*, is there a plainer or more equitable Rule, than, for Every Man to keep within the *Bounds* of *Natural Right*, and the *Laws* of the *Land*? That no Man should invade another's Property, or do him any real Injury? And, that in all Cases not expresly determin'd by the Laws, all Men should follow the Golden Rule, and *Do to every one, as they would*

would have every one Do to them. That they put themselves in the Circumstances of others; make others Case their own, by an Impartial Judgment of the whole Matter, and with due Allowance for the different Circumstances of Things. This is the Great Law of *Natural* Equity: It is taken into the *Christian* Institutes: And it was affected by the Emperor *Severus*, as his *Motto*. This alone, would be sufficient to preserve a strict Regard to other Mens Rights, with a just Sense of Tenderness and Compassion too. But in Things determined by the Laws, is it not a Rule equally plain and equitable, *That All, as Members of the Community, are obliged to observe them faithfully?* If every Man studied, to conform himself to the known Laws of the Land; and keep within the Bounds, prescribed by the Civil Society, which are always supposed design'd for the Publick Good; their Governing Views would meet, pretty much in a Point, and be in no danger of clashing with each other, or injuring the Publick. 'Tis when Men set up, their particular Apprehensions, in Opposition to the Laws of the Society; and oppose their Private Interests, to the Publick Good; That they raise Discontent, and Discord, and disturb the Common Peace and Welfare. Whereas in all Cases of real Grievance and certain Mistake, (and no Humane Wisdom is infallible, or therefore capable of providing against all the possible Consequences of Things) 'tis most reasonable *to seek Relief by regular Methods; and, by proper Representations, endeavouring a legal Alteration.*

This Measure would also regulate the Behaviour of Private Men, towards their Governors.

nors. It would keep them from disrespectful Language of their Superiors; from censuring their Conduct, and Administration, at all Adventures; from entertaining private Grudges, in their Minds; or creating Animosities, among their Fellow Subjects. It would root out the Seeds of Sedition, hinder them from running into Parties, and Factions, or breaking out into open Rebellions: Which are the Convulsions of the Body Politick; and alike unnatural, as for one Member, to attempt the Destruction, of another.

And tho' in *Religious Liberty*, (or the free Allowance of every Man to judge for himself in Matters of Conscience,) Men are liable to greater Diversity, from different Capacities of Mind, and early Impressions of Education; yet, one plain and equitable Rule, would here too prevent any dangerous Abuse;——*To keep within the Bounds, of the Written Law of God, or the Holy Scriptures.* This is the only Rule, of Religion, to Christians. Every Man ought to search into the true Meaning of *Scripture*; use the best *Means* afforded him; lie open at all Times to Conviction; and faithfully follow his own Conscience, in the last Issue, without indulging his own Prejudices, or yielding to the meer Authority of others. Now, if every Man was to take this Care for himself, and fairly allow all others to do so too; tho' they should not fall into one Opinion, in every Thing, or walk exactly in the same Way; yet they would agree, whatever Differences remain, to live in Peace with one another. The Great *Ends* of Religion would be answer'd. Every one would act with *Uprightness* towards God,

God, and find Acceptance with Him: And there would be a mutual Concurring to preserve *Love* and *Charity*. There could then be no Temptation, to injure, to offer ill Treatment or Violence to Any. When each enjoy'd his full Liberty and proper Right, they might probably come nearer the Truth, and each other too; as all false Biasses would be removed; and every Man be left to act with conscientious Freedom, without the Restraint of Fear, or popular Prejudice.

If any Man, under the Pretence of Liberty, should run into plain Mistakes, his Speculative Errors could not injure the true Opinions of others; or if he acts uprightly, endanger himself. And as there is no possible Way to set a Man right, who judges wrong, but by proper Evidence and Conviction; so he can only be accountable for his Judgment, after his best Endeavours, to that Omniscient Being who *searches the Hearts*. And we have Reason to believe, from the Perfections of his Nature, as well as the Revelation of his Will, that He will deal with equitable Kindness by every Man, according to the Integrity of his Heart. But if his Opinions lead him to Practices injurious to Others, or inconsistent with the Publick Peace, they then become properly a Matter of a Civil Nature, and fall under the Cognizance and Correction of the Civil Magistrate; Who is obliged, by his Office, to protect the Publick Peace, and Civil Rights of the Subject, against all Invasion, on what Pretence soever.

For which Reason, the *Laws* against *Roman Catholicks*, who own a Foreign Jurisdiction, and avow Principles inconsistent with our Liberties, n.b.

are justifiable and necessary: Not meerly as they are mistaken, and have fallen into Speculative Errors; but as their Opinions are injurious to the Civil Constitution, and inconsistent with every Man's just Liberty.

n.b.

Indeed, *All Abusers* of Liberty ought to suffer, according to the Nature of those Abuses which they persist in. I wish that all such would reflect, with care, on what I have said concerning the *Mischiefs* that attend, or follow, *Licentiousness*. It is *Licentiousness* that, of late, has passd for *Liberty*. And Men have carried it, as if they were resolved to provoke the Powers, both of Heaven, and Earth, to wrest their Liberties out of their Hands. How many have gloried in their Freedom, to do base and ill Things, rather than to attempt any thing truly Great, and Good? But shall we go on, to act, at this Degenerate Rate? Has *Licentiousness* prospered so much, as to encourage Men still to pursue their *Impieties*, and *Rebellions*? Have the *Libertine Writers* and *Talkers* of this Age, any thing so amiable in their Characters, as to invite others to copy after them? We now see a *daring Licentiousness*, in Instances innumerable, brought to Shame and Disgrace; And, in some Cases, it has produced utter Ruin and Destruction. What dangerous Errors! What scandalous Vices! What unreasonable Quarrels! What Ficklenes and changing of Sides! What silly Boasts! And what insupportable Chagrin! has the *Licentiousness* of Multitudes betray'd them into?

Whereas now, on the other hand, think how happy a People, the Inhabitants of *Britain* might be, were they but Wise enough to value, and

and to use aright, their *Liberty*. Every Man might act even as with the Bravery and Temper of a *Prince*, if He was but careful to maintain the *Decorum* of such a One: I mean, if he was but more intent upon the Practice of those *Virtues*, which are the Support, and Ornament of Crowns and Thrones. And were we but more possess'd, with the *enlarged Spirit* of true *Christianity*, every Man might shine as much, in his *Religious*, as in his *Civil* Capacity. Tumults, and Divisions would then cease for Ever. And All the Blessings of a Free-State would flow in upon us, till we were raised to a Pitch of Happiness, that should make us envyed by the Rest of the World; Tho', at the same time, fearless of any Attempts, to break in upon us. A true Sense of *Liberty*, would soon free us from many Restraints, that now lie upon one, or other, Party among us.

It would inspire Men with a Generousness, that should cut off their present Occasions of Reproaching, and hating, one another. And would give such a Courage, in all Undertakings for the Publick Good, as is not to be daunted, or born down. I will venture to say, of true *English* Liberty, what was once said of the Liberty of the *Antient Romans*; —— *Libertatem, nemo Bonus, nisi cum Anima Simul, amittit.*

FINIS

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ANY kind of Letters, Essays, Extracts out of valuable Authors, or Intelligence of any Affairs which may serve the first declared Intention of this Paper, will be thankfully received, if directed to the *Author of the Occasional Paper*, to be left at *North's* Coffee-house, *King-street*, near *Guild-hall*, *London*, or at the Publishers of this Paper, Post paid.

Lately Publish'd,

THE *Occasional Paper*. Vol. 3. Numb. 4. containing several LETTERS, *viz.* 1. To the Author of this Paper; upon a *Remarkable Saying*, insisted on by Dr. *Bis*, in his *Sermons* on the *Beauty of Holiness in the Common-Prayer*. 2. Remarks upon a Passage in Dr. *Bis's*, and another in Dr. *Lupton's* Sermons, before the Sons of the Clergy; concerning the Authority of the *Fathers*, in interpreting Scripture: Directed to the Author of this Paper. 3. A Letter directed to the Author of *Vulgar Prepossessions in Favour of the Bishop of* Bangor: By a Well-Wisher to the *Occasional Paper*. 4. A Letter from Mr. *De la Pillonniere*, to the Author of this Paper; allowing him to publish a Letter of Mr. *Cotton Mather* of *New-England*. 5. Mr. *Cotten Mather's* Letter to Mr. *De la Pillonniere*: Printed from the Original. Printed for *Em. Matthews*, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*.

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. VI.

LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.

VIZ.

I. *One* relating to the Removal of the Incapacities of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

II. *Another* upon the same Argument.

III. Queries about Coercion in Matters of Religion.

IV. A Letter, with a *Latin* Epitaph upon *Bigotry*.

LONDON:

Printed for EM. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*; J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*; J. HARRISON, under the *Royal-Exchange*; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*.

I. TO THE

Author of the Occasional Paper.

SIR, *Nov.* 18. 1718.

I Congratulate you, as I doubt not but you are a Sharer in the Publick Joy, upon the auspicious Beginnings of this Session of Parliament: That we have so agreeable a Prospect, from the early and entire Concurrence of Both Houses with his Majesty's Measures in this great Conjuncture, that those, who have disturbed the Repose of *Europe* and been injurious to the Interests of our Trade and Nation, will hearken in Time to Pacifick Counsels, or be soon obliged to submit to Reason by the Blessing of God upon a vigorous War.

When I tell you, that I am a *Protestant Dissenter*, you will easily imagine that I entertain some Hopes (indeed who does not?) from this happy Situation of his Majesty's Af-

fairs, that the Time is now at hand for the long expected Relief of a large Body of his good Subjects, whom their Friends and their Enemies know to be universally full of the most dutiful Affection.

We cannot harbour a Thought so injurious to his Excellent Majesty, or his present Ministry, as to imagine that it is in their Inclination to continue those, under Marks of odious Distinction from their Fellow-Subjects, who are to a Man in the Interests of their King and Country, merely for the sake of a conscientious and peaceable Difference in some Matters of Religion. No, we are satisfy'd; that justerSentiments of Liberty, and of the Rights of Mankind, reign in the Royal Breast and the present Court.

Certainly it may be hoped from the Goodness of this Administration, that the many Instances of Resignation to the publick Service which the *Dissenters* have shewn, will now be remembred to their Advantage. When the Prospect of the Protestant Succession was more distant and dubious, and the Approach of the late Peace seemed greatly to indanger it; some of our Patriots could see no Way to prevent it but by sacrificing the *Dissenters* for a Season in the *Occasional Bill.* 'Tis well known, what Part the *Dissenters* acted at that Time: Tho' they were fully convinc'd, this Expedient was not like to answer its End; yet since the principal Friends of the Succession had mighty Expectations from it, they quietly submitted, resolving to make no Application to the Powers then in Being to obstruct it. And must they still go on to suffer in his Majesty's

jesty's happy Reign, for their Silence at that Time out of meer Deference to his Majesty's Interest? It was with an equal Regard to the present Royal Family, that many of them were then prevailed upon to continue in their Places, of no small Trouble and Expence in Corporations, tho' they were forced to deny themselves the Liberty of worshipping God in that Way which they thought most eligible; meerly that they might not abandon their Stations into disaffected Hands. But all this was upon the fullest Confidence, grounded (I may venture to say) upon some Assurances of being relieved, in Case the Protestant Succession took Place. And must they still be left in their Bonds? While the present Government was new and unsettled, and when a Rebellion was afterwards formed against it, they silently sighed under their Burthens, and chearfully did the utmost that the Restraints which they were under would allow them, for the Service of their Country and their Sovereign; and during some Sessions since, (of every one of which, they hoped that it would have been the Year of Grace) they have paid all Deference to the Judgment of those at Helm, that it was not yet a proper Time to bring their Case upon the Stage in Parliament. They have seen Rebels pardoned and placed *in statu quo*; and have restrained every Murmur. Those in expensive Stations of Service, have generally continued in the Practice of Self-denial, and forborn to throw up their Places; and those who had a Right to interest themselves in any Elections for Parliament or Magistracy, have shewn the same strenuous Zeal every where

where to support the Pretensions of *Low-Churchmen.*

But must they ever be *Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water?* If at this length of time it is not thought fit to redress their Grievances, surely it must be because the publick Affairs are so well settled that their farther Service is not necessary. Then certainly it is high time for those of them who have made a shift to comply with the Terms of retaining their Places, to ease their Minds, and lessen their Expences, by resigning them up into other Hands; for they have been induced to keep them hitherto only for the Service of His Majesty.

But are the Friends of the Government indeed become so numerous, or its Enemies so inconsiderable and disconcerted, as that it can appear good Sense and Policy to continue so many of its inviolable Friends with their Hands ty'd behind them? Who have not one in their Number, that has ever shewn a Disaffection, or even a Coldness to the Government? Who are in Principle and Conscience fixed to the Foundations upon which it stands? We often hear Complaints of the want of a competent Number of well-affected Persons to fill the Commissions of the Peace in Counties; and I am sure in several Corporations, set aside the Dissenters, there will not be found *Low-Churchmen* enough of tolerable Fortunes to fill their Room. And is it not time, when such Things are represented from every Quarter, to strengthen the true Protestant Interest among us, by capacitating all for the Service of

of their Country, who are entirely well-affected to it?

I cannot but hope then, that the Justice, the Wisdom, the Goodness of those in the Ministry, and in the Parliament, will not suffer them any longer to defer the Consideration of this Affair; so necessary to the Security of the Throne, to the Honour of the Administration, to the Union of Protestants, and to the easing of the Minds of many of his Majesty's good Subjects.

I will only add, that in Case upon these Views the Wisdom of the Nation should see fit to remove any Incapacities of Dissenters for the Service of their Country, I cannot doubt but they will endeavour to do it so thoroughly as to reach the Ends of it. Those without Doors are by no means to prescribe to the Legislature; but it may be a Piece of Justice and Honesty to let them know, that but a small Number of the Dissenters will be in the least relieved or made more capable of Usefulness than they are at present, by any thing short of the Repeal of the *Test-Act*. This was Matter of evident Experience before the *Occasional-Bill* was thought of; and no doubt would be so again, if it were utterly abolished.

I have taken the Freedom, Sir, to suggest these Things to you, who have in some of your Papers generously espoused the Cause of Common Liberty; hoping it will either excite you to communicate some more of your own Thoughts upon this Head to the Publick, or that you will please to do this short

Paper

Paper the Honour of a Place in your Collections. I am

&c.

II. TO THE

Author of the Occasional-Paper

SIR,

YOUR last Year's Paper,* *of Removing the Incapacities of Protestant Dissenters,* was writ with so just a Sense of the Subject you undertook to manage, as gives hopes to many of your Readers that you cannot be content what you there said should be forgot or disregarded. And the general good Opinion that Paper met with, is methinks an Encouragement to resume your Argument. I know not whether the important Matters that are now transacting Abroad, will allow the Court and Parliament to apply themselves immediately to consider Things of this Nature at Home: But it cannot be amiss, to sollicit this Affair with a fresh Concern and Earnestness, considering even the *present* State of the Nation. Whether the War with *Spain* be prevented, or carried on, yet there are Reasons on both Sides why the *Protestant Dis-*

* Vol. II. Numb. IV.

senters

senters should not be overlook'd at this Juncture.

If a War with *Spain* should be prevented, it should then seem, that something for a farther enlarging of the Protestant Interest, and for suppressing a Clamorous Rebellious Set of People among us, that are industriously contriving to keep up our Animosities and Divisions, is the very Business to be principally gone upon. And if a War with *Spain* be found necessary, and should be engaged in, it should also seem highly requisite for the King of *Great Britain* to acquire (as far as possible) the Advancement of the *Protestant Religion*, the more effectually to oppose the King of *Spain*'s Zeal for the *Roman Religion* †: And so weakning the Hopes and Expectations which the *Spanish* Court may have formed of a Party, to side with them, among ourselves. 'Tis certain, if there should be a War, the Protestant Dissenters are like to be very great Sufferers, as well as Others. They are as much exposed to the loss of Ships, and Merchandize, in which too they are some of them as highly concerned as their Neighbours; And They are not for being a whit behind hand in any Taxes or Contributions that may be requisite to support a necessary Expence. And why they should always share in the Charges and Calamities of their Country, but yet be excluded the Privileges and Advantages which are common to *Englishmen*, They cannot conceive.

† *Duke of* Rohan's *Maxims*.

Besides, if the Friends of *Spain* here in *England* should shew themselves in all that Disaffection to the present Government which it is natural to suppose they may do upon an open Rupture, how helpful might the *Protestant Dissenters* be, were they capable of publick Offices, to prevent those Mischiefs and Disorders which we must every where be looking for? They have been very serviceable, even under all their Disadvantages, towards the suppressing of the late Rebellion: But, if whilst Acts of Grace are made for Rebels, no Remedy to their uneasinesses be provided for them; certainly those must have an Opinion of them as the best of Subjects, who can expect that they will farther expose themselves in any struggles that shall happen.

They have generally formed Expectations from this *Parliament*, and I apprehend too from this *Session*; nay their very Enemies *Expect* that now something will be done for them. And 'tis humbly presum'd, that it would not much interrupt any other Affairs, to have one Bill prepared in their Favour. The Management of this might be entrusted with some who are free from the Encumbrances of Foreign Affairs, and from the Obligations of a Constant Attendance to other Business. And I cannot but think other Affairs would receive Advantage from this, and not Detriment.

And, Pray Sir, where is it apprehended, *A Bill to remove the Incapacities of Protestant Dissenters* would stop, suppose it once brought into Parliament? Or what Prejudice is it Thought would accrue to the present Ministry

stry and their Designs, by a Vigorous pushing of it? I am persuaded the Envy and ill-Will of those who are *displeased*, would not be a Whit *greater* than it is: Whereas the Affection and good Services of those who would be *obliged*, would be exceedingly encreas'd. Their Enemies would become *less* able to give them *Uneasiness*, and their Friends *more* able to give them *Assistance*. Those who now may be troublesome in order to hinder the Dissenters Relief, would hereafter find it necessary to talk in another Strain; or at least they would lose the Occasion which now so much animates them in their talk; and so by Degrees their Clamours would either wholly cease, or at least cease to have any great Effect. The grand Pretence of the *Church* of *England* being weakned, by letting the Dissenters into Civil Offices, I think you have fully answer'd in your Paper mention'd at the Beginning of this Letter. 'Tis certain the *Reform'd Protestant* Church of *England* must gain both Strength and Reputation by the Favour shewn to their Protestant Brethren: And I persuade my self, that the *Nonjuring Church*, and those who affect now to call themselves the *True Church* of *England*, no Man that has a just Value for the *English* Constitution but would be glad to see *Weakned*, and as soon as may be utterly disabled.

Is it pretended, now, that the Interest of These Men is great enough, to prevent a *Repealing Bill*'s passing in Parliament? Sure, that will not be acknowledg'd after so many successful Steps, as have been taken to suppress them. And whilst other Things have been

carried in the *H*—— of *C*—— in spite of all that could be said or contriv'd, to oppose the Court, no Body can doubt the Influence which the present *M*——*y* would have in this Attempt to serve the Best of *Kings* and the Best of *Causes* (I mean true *Protestantism*,) would they but once heartily set about it. I cannot think the *C*——*s* would drop such a *Bill*: Since there are so many of Them, who have shewn their Desire of its being brought in.

And I would not doubt the *L*——*s* still maintaining those Sentiments, which they had of the Dissenters at the *Revolution*; and which they have been pleas'd to declare since, and also have appointed to stand upon Record in their *Journal*. What the *B*——*ps* promised and most heartily concur'd to bring about in 1689, it cannot be thought the present *B*—*ps* will set themselves against. For surely they are as hearty Protestants, as Those *B*——*ps* were.

I will only here humbly ask leave to mention the Words *of the Declaration of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal*, in and about the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, assembled at *Guildhall*, *Dec.* 11. 1688. "And we do hereby de-
" clare, That we will, with our utmost En-
" deavours, assist his Highness in the obtain-
" ing such a Parliament with all speed, where-
" in our Laws, our Liberties and Properties
" may be secured, the *Church* of *England* in
" particular, with a *due Liberty* to *Protestant*
" *Dissenters*; and in general the Protestant Re-
" ligion and Interest over the whole World
" may be supported and encouraged, to the
" Glory of God, the Happiness of the esta-
" blish'd

"blish'd Government in these Kingdoms, and "the Advantage of all *Princes* and *States* in "*Christendom*, that may be herein concerned.

The *Due Liberty* here promis'd was thought by some to imply a Removal of the Sacramental *Test*, but less certainly could not be meant than what was afterward procured for the *Dissenters*, by the Act of *Toleration* or *Indulgence*. Whatever, therefore, has since taken away any of those Advantages secured by that Act, must be look'd upon as an Infringement of that which by the whole Legislature was declared a *Due Liberty*. And therefore 'tis humbly hoped, their Lordships *will not* oppose the Restoring of Dissenters to those Privileges, which they Themselves allow'd to be *just* and *due*, and which they enjoy'd all King *William*'s time, and the best part of Queen *Anne*'s, by Virtue of the *Toleration Act*

And the rather, because their Lordships have connected with this *Due Liberty* to *Protestant Dissenters*, the Strengthning and Supporting the *Protestant Religion* and *Interest* over the *whole World*: And declaring that they look'd upon this Treatment of the *Dissenters*, together with their securing the *Church* of *England*, to be for the Glory of God, the Happiness of the *Establish'd Government* of these Kingdoms, and the Advantage of other *Princes* and *States* in *Christendom*.

I would hope this Letter may put you upon doing something Better, on this Head, your self: but if your Thoughts should be otherwise employ'd, pray give this a Place in your next Paper. I am

Nov. 12. 1718. *&c.*

III.

III. TO THE

Author of the Occasional-Paper.

SIR,

YOU having so openly and heartily opposed the Advocates for Coercion in Matters of Religion, and yet they being still Numerous, and carrying their Demands so high as to require all Men to submit to their Authority, I beg I may have Liberty in your Paper to propose to such Zealots the following Queries, *viz.*

Whether, upon considering mine own Frame and that of the whole visible World, it be not evident to Demonstration that there must be a First Cause and Maker of all, most Powerful Wise and Good, (*i. e.*) a GOD?

Whether my being made Rational and so fit to be govern'd by him, will not prove me accountable to him for all my Conduct.

Must not the Law of my Maker therefore be the Rule of my Conduct?

Is it not reasonable to suppose that this Rule of my Conduct in general, or the Law of my Maker, will result from and be agreeable to the Natural Relations wherein I stand to Him and my Fellow Creatures, and the Frame and Condition of mine own Nature?

Does not my Relation to Men as Creatures of the same Species and Order, oblige me to promote the Happiness of all, as far as I can, and

and in the very same Instances which I reckon needful to mine own? Yes

May not this be made out from my including Infinite Wisdom and Goodness in the Idea of GOD? For can a Being infinitely Good be supposed to require any Thing from his Creatures, not directly tending to their singular and common Happiness? Or can One infinitely Wise as well as Good (and who knows the Obedience of his Creatures can add nothing to his own Felicity) have any other End in giving Laws to his Creatures, besides making them happy by a due Regard to them? Yes No No

Can any Thing be a part of Religion, or indeed consistent with it, which is contrary to Duties so manifestly founded on those Mutual and Natural Relations? Or can the Revealed Will of GOD give Countenance to any Thing of this Kind, when from the forementioned Notion of GOD it seems impossible he should have any such Will? No No

Can the Christian Religion therefore, which is undoubtedly a Revelation of the Will of GOD, require or allow any Thing which runs counter to the Relative Duties above-mention'd? Were not this Manifestly to require or allow of Contradictions? No No

How then can I justify myself, be I Papist, Protestant, Episcopal, Presbyterian, &c. in persecuting those who differ from me in Religion, when the doing so is directly contrary to the Great and Fundamental Duty of Nature between Creatures of the same Kind, viz. Mutual Benevolence? No, Not at all

Can Those in any Sense be said to have a due Tenderness for Mankind, or bear them hearty

hearty Good-will, who are for discouraging, distressing, hurting and destroying all who differ from them; if they have it in their Power?

Can a Regard to Mens higher Interests be an Argument or Excuse for doing them such Injury in inferior Concerns? Can he in good earnest be solicitous for my Salvation, and wish well to my Soul, who has no Pity on my Body, no Mercy on my Character or my Estate? And instead of dealing with me as a rational Creature, by the fair and gentle Method of Argument and Perswasion, will use me as a Brute, and force a Religion or a Sentiment in Religion upon me by Violence and Compulsion?

Can this Method convince the Mind, or conciliate a rational Esteem and Respect for any Religion, or any Notion or Practice in the World?

Will it not rather possess *Dissenters* with more inveterate Prejudices, against a Religion this Way forced upon them, and make them hate it in their Hearts, though an outward Profession may be extorted from Them? And are there more *Infidels* any where than within Reach of the Inquisition?

Is not Persecution then more likely to hurt and ruin Mens Souls, than to promote their Salvation; and therefore a Mean ill chosen for that End, if Persecutors can really intend it?

If it be pretended, that it is out of Zeal for God and his Truth that Men persecute, and out of tender Concern for the Salvation of those who profess the true Religion but are in Danger of being corrupted by Error and false Religion;

Is

Is it not evident to Demonstration, that Love to Mens Souls can never be the Motive to Persecution, when all expected from it is Uniformity only in outward Profession or Practice? Since they are still in Danger, however Orthodox their Opinions be, or Right their Practices, if they are not sincerely Religious; and can't be more hurt by Heterodox Notions or unconformable Practices, than by wicked Lives?

Must not those therefore who really persecute out of Concern for the Preservation of Mens Souls, persecute those who are of the same Religion with themselves till their Conformity to the right Faith and Practice has changed their Hearts and amended their Lives? Unless all that is necessary to secure their Salvation, is to secure their Profession of the right Faith and Religion? Can the Maintenance of the pure Faith and Religion, that is, the outward Profession and Practice of it, be an Equivalent for that Injury, and Violence, and Barbarity that is committed by Persecution upon Mens Characters, and Persons, and Estates? Or is it not a manifest Disparagement of Religion, to suppose it enjoyns or countenances such a Spirit and Principle of Preposterous Love? Or what Regard is paid by this Way of Proceeding to that Order of our Lord, that *the Tares should grow up with the Wheat till the Harvest?*

Can that Zeal be acceptable to God that would extinguish Good-will to the Bulk of Mankind, and vacate the Universal and Fundamental Law before-mentioned, of common Benevolence? How doth it appear that such

Not at all
None

Zeal will be approved of God? Where is the Warrant for it? Is it to be fetched from Reason, when it seems so directly to contradict one of the plainest and most important Laws of Reason with Respect to our mutual Conduct? Or is it founded in Revelation? Is there any plain and express Warrant of this Kind in any Part of the Word of GOD? Is there any Thing to be met with there that looks like an Authority given to Christians to persecute Heathens, or one sort of Christians to persecute another?

No — No
No
No
No

Should such Authority or Allowance be found there, would it be to any Purpose, if it be not as plainly specified and declared who should have this Authority, and upon whom it must be exercised?

No

If this be plainly declared in the Christian Revelation, how come the several Sects of Christians in their Turn to claim this persecuting Power? Have all a Right to use it when they can?

Because they are not christianized.
No

But, can there be any Thing favouring Persecution in a Revelation, where no one Duty is more strongly enjoyned or more vehemently press'd than universal Love and Kindness, even to Enemies, and those who differ from us in Religion?

No

Master, said a Lawyer to our Savour, *what must I do to Inherit eternal Life*? Our Saviour replies to him, *what is written in the Law*? To this he answers, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and thy Neighbour as thy self. Upon this* our Saviour tells him, *he had answer'd right*; and adds, *this do and thou shalt*

shalt live. The Lawyer hereupon, willing to know the full Extent of his Duty, asks on, *but who is my Neighbour?* To this our Saviour replies by a Parable, by which he plainly intimates that the Notion of a Neighbour is not only to be carried among those of the same Church and Nation, but through the whole Species.

But should this be thought no full Declaration of our Lord, against Persecution, yet who can resist the Evidence of such multiplied Commands as these? *By this, shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if you have Love to one another. Love worketh no Ill to its Neighbour, therefore is it the fulfilling of the Law. These Things I command you that you love one another. Love one another, for he that loveth fulfilleth the Law. He who saith he is in the Light and hateth his Brother, is in Darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the Darkness hath blinded his Eyes. Whoever hateth his Brother, is a* Murtherer, *and ye know that no Murtherer hath eternal Life abiding in him. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love. If a Man saith he loveth God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar; for he who loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how should he love God whom he hath not seen? This Commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his Brother also.*

Is it not evident from these Passages, that Revelation and Reason concur (and so they must, if both are from God) to enjoyn the Practice of Universal Good-will to Mankind, and therefore to condemn and forbid Persecution?

Yes but by divine Rules

Is not every Man to judge for himself, how he must serve God, that he may be accepted of him?

Yes

May not those who differ from me in Religious Matters, put as high a Value upon their Souls as I do, and be as much concerned for their eternal Wellfare? Do not Justice and Charity both oblige me to think so, when nothing in their Behaviour manifestly contradicts this Judgment?

Yes

as Christians ought

How kind would Men be to each other, if they entertained this just and kind Opinion, under the Conduct of meer natural Religion, and the Obligation and Influence of the forementioned Duty, notwithstanding their different Sentiments and Practices?

Yes

Is it not a scandal to Christianity, that its Professors should be more Unkind and Merciless to each other, than they would have been if they had been still left to the Light of Nature, and complied with the Obligations of the Natural Law?

it is to be feared Yes

Is it not every Man's Desire to have Liberty to serve God in the Way he thinks most agreeable to his Mind and Will, without being persecuted for it? And should not all Men practice according to this Rule, remembring that *whatever we would that Men should do to us, we should do the same to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets?*

Yes

Can this Desire be in any Respect deemed Unreasonable or Evil, when it's only a Desire to do what will render us most pleasing to God and best accepted with him; which ought to be the great and last Aim and Pursuit of every reasonable Being?

Why

Why should any Man give me Uneasiness in pursuing this End, in the way which appears to me the most direct, when I do him no Injury, and when he would think himself very hardly used, if himself should be made uneasy upon the same Score? He might not

Can the persecuting Zealot undertake to justify me or bear me harmless at GOD's Bar, for renouncing or suppressing an Opinion or Practice which I think Right and he thinks Wrong? Or if I must answer for my self, is it using me as he would be used himself? Nay is it not the last Degree of Inhumanity, to force me to profess what he thinks right against mine own Conviction and altogether at mine own Cost? To ruin and burn me in this World for not professing *his* Faith, and yet leave me to suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire for parting with *my own*; Would not every Man in his own Case, and that very justly too, think this very hard Measure? No No Yes Yes

These Quæries, Sir, have been concluding to my self, that I think I should be a very bad Man were I a Persecutor, but I hope I as heartily abhor it in my self as I do in others. And were this Spirit as general as it ought to be, and as Men are apt to wish it, when they fear or feel the weight of Persecution, I am perswaded we should be a much happier Church and Nation. My good Wishes have put me upon soliciting a Room for my Quæries in your Paper, that under the Recommendation of your Name they may pass into the World; and put Men upon thinking, if the still Voice of Reason may be heard in the present Tumult of Mens Passions. If you have the same

Opi-

Opinion of their Weight and Force which I my ſelf have, I doubt not but I ſhall be gratified. In the mean time I heartily applaud your Excellent Deſign, and wiſh the utmoſt Succeſs to it.

Yours,

BENEVOLUS.

VI. TO THE

Author of the Occaſional-Paper

SIR,

SINCE you are pleas'd ſo freely and frequently to invite Epiſtles, Eſſays, and other Compoſures, to your Common Occaſional Fund, pleaſe to accept the incloſed *Epitaph*, made by a Country Gentleman. Compoſed it was much about the Time of its Date, and the Union of the two Kingdoms of this Iſle into the *Britiſh* Monarchy. Then it was hoped and ſuppoſed that the Prodigious Creature here deſcribed was as good as ſtruck Dead, and buried in the famous Chappel, where one Part of the Legiſlature offer their ſolemn Devotions. 'Tis but lately that I ſaw your Diſcourſe of Bigotry; which put me in mind, that ſome Years ago, I had ſeen the Compoſure, that theſe Lines accompany. Otherwiſe, poſſibly, you might have had it ſooner; if not time enough

hough to have attended that Discourse. The Author was obliged to Retain the *English* Name in his *Latin* Description; as not finding (as he apprehends) a *Latin* one sufficiently Correspondent to the *English* Idea. For tho' the Word *Superstitio* comes nearest to it; yet he reckons there may be Distinction between Bigotry and Superstition. There may be Persons in the World, who may be deemed Superstitious in some Accidentals, or supposed Appendages of Religion, who yet would easily quit those Accidentals or Appendages, were they divested of that Authority that is now presumed to enjoyn them; and in the mean time are ready to Cultivate good Opinion and Converse with those that in Sentiment and Practice differ from them; who therefore are not to be reckoned or stiled *Bigots*: Nor will you, I suppose, disagree with the Author in that Surmize. But be that, as it will. Having lately gotten from the Author a Copy of the *Epitaph*, I here present it to you (as being well pleased with your Generous Design for the Rights and just Liberties of Mankind) for the Entertainment if you think meet of your *Latin* Readers.

EPITAPHIUM.

Monstri Cujusdam
Apud Anglos *Bigottry* Vulgo Dicti;
In S. Stephani Antiquo
Apud Westmonasterienses sacello
Terræ & Tenebris Mandati,
May 1. 1707.

Hic jacet, (semperq; jaceat!)
Pietatis Cadaver,
Improbitatis Corpus,
Religionis Larva,
Sanctimoniæ Hostis, & Umbra,
Divini Imago Zeli, & Pestis,
Ecclesiæ Simia simul & Lupus,
Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui [illegible] optimi.
Romæ Antiquæ Natum,
Novæ in Tutelam Acceptum,
In caliginosis Vaticani Adytis,
Humano Sanguine & Pulvere Pyrio
Nutritum, Saginatum.
Hispanicæ Ditionis Incola,
Gallicis deinde Regionibus Hospes
Jamdudum Gratissimus;
Veteris quidem, Noviq; Orbis,

Hu-

Humani Generis & Commodi causâ
Peregrinator Assiduus,
Linguarum Peritus, Quarumcunq;
Sexuum Amicus, Particeps.
Mentium Illuminator Flammeus,
Acutissimus Dubitantium Ductor,
Qui Tepidos, ardentes, incendiosque,
Reluctantium Animarum Catervas
Festinas in Cœlum Amandat,
Celerrimus Orbis Conversor.
Conspirationum Exitiarum,
Veratum pariter ac Simulatarum
(Mali revera Machinarum infandi)
Artifex Dexterrimus.
Fociscus dub monstro & ignitus,
Sub pelle Ovina & Vultu,
Laboratis penitus Ecclesiastica
Communia penè Civilis,
Ac Societatis Humanæ
Indomitus Vastator & Prædo.
Astibus Politis, Philosophis,
Criticis Acribus, Logicis, Sophis,
Cabalistis, Linguæq; telis,
Conciliorum, Canonumq; Bombardis,
Cæterisq; Gentis togatæ Armamentis
Bellator Instructissimus.
Qui furor, ac odium, ac nefas,
Fastusq; ac Seculi Amor,
Perjuria, Piæq; Fraudes,
Truculenta Partium studia,

THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. VII.

OF

DIVISIONS.

Quo ruitis? Quæve ista repens discordia surgit?
O cohibete Iras——

Virg. Æn. Lib. 12.

——Amongst ourselves, with too much Heat,
We sometimes wrangle when we should debate;
A consequential Ill, which Freedom draws;
A bad Effect, but from a noble Cause.

Prior's Letter to *Boileau.*

LONDON:

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OF DIVISIONS.

IT grieves one to look round the World, and obſerve how Men ſtand diſtinguiſh'd and divided from One Another; to ſee a Race of Beings, made for *Society*, and diſpos'd to all the Offices of Kindneſs and Friendſhip, yet *ſorting* themſelves, and gathering into particular *Clans*, to oppoſe, run down, and deſtroy each other.

Such is the Diſorder of Mankind, as to become worſe, in this Reſpect, than the *Brutes* themſelves: Inſomuch that the various Tempers and Vices of Men do repreſent, under *one Species*, all the various Ill-Natures of the *ſeveral Species* of Creatures below us: And that which ſhould diſtinguiſh us from them, as peculiar to our own Kind, (I mean *Humanity*) is in a great meaſure loſt, and given up in exchange for ſome brutal

Qualities; such as the Craft of the *Fox*, the Cruelty of the *Wolf*, the cunning Insinuation of the *Serpent*, or the like.

Here and there One, like *Ishmael*, sets up as it were for a vast *Species* alone: His *Hand* being *against every Man, and every Man's Hand against him.* Others flock together in Companies; and this, not for their Security only, but to drive away and bear down All that are not of their own Sort, tho' perhaps more Innocent and more Useful than themselves. Indeed, whatever Separations, or Destruction of One Another is observable among the Brute Creatures of *different Kinds*, we see amongst Men, tho' All of the *same Kind.*

This is an Observation that necessarily argues our great Degeneracy; and, at the same time gives reason to fear, that we are beyond Remedy. For, if any one talks of Union, or Peace, or Humanity, or a more general good Agreement, this is interpreted only as the Cunning or Design of one Set of Men to prevail against Others: And 'tis great odds, but that those who are divided and at variance with one another, will all agree to crush the small Party of *Reconcilers*, or to drive them out of the Field.

Here I was going to drop my Subject and my Pen; concluding it a vain Attempt to write upon *Divisions* with the Hope of doing any Good. I was now ready to wish my self in some Country Retirement, far from

from the Squabbles of the *Town*, and its *Contending Parties*. That of *Virgil* came strongly upon my Mind,

Fortunatus & ille, Deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaq; Sylvanumq; senem, Nymphasq; sorores!
Illum non Populi Fasces, non purpura Regum
Flexit, & infidos agitans discordia Fratres.

Happy the Man, who rural Piety
And Peace enjoys: from all Ambition free:
Regardless of the *City's Sword*, or *Mace*;
Or, who at *Courts* obtain the highest Place:
Nor fears the Consequence of Discord's Flames,
When faithless Brethren wrong each others Names.

Thus was I beginning to amuse my self, and to save my Reader the Time which this Paper might take up. But hearing of a *Bill* brought into the House of LORDS, which was intended to take away some of the unhappy Causes of those Divisions, which have of late been fomented among us; and hearing of that happy Disposition which show'd it self in some *Peers*, whose *Great Names* must promise Success to all healing Attempts; I immediately resum'd my Pen, and resolv'd to take this favourable Conjuncture to speak my Mind on some of those *Divisions*, which keep Men in a State of Strangeness, or of Enmity to one another.

'Tis certain, that in many Instances, *Differences* are unavoidable. And when *Men* differ, they

they *may*, and sometimes they *should*, *debate* Matters: But then the Dispute ought to be managed *fairly*, and so as that *Difference* may never create *Discord*, or be followed with Uncharitableness and *Division*. The Debate should never grow so warm, as to enflame the Passions, lest Anger by degrees should settle into *Hatred*, and deliberate *Spite*; and so, at last, carry the Contenders to *Wars* and mutual *Destruction*.

How often has it happen'd in the World, that even a Difference in some *Speculative Notion* and Opinion has produc'd those Contests, by which Men have been irreconcileably divided! When, if They could have allowed each other to *differ*, no Hurt would have come either to Themselves, or the Cause for which they were concerned: But when these Things have made Divisions, the *Parties* on both sides have greatly suffered from their ill Treatment of one another; and the *Cause* it self about which they quarrel, has no less suffered in the Opinions and Censures of Beholders.

The Difficulties acknowledg'd to be in some Points, and the Fury with which these are pursued by some who either Deny or Doubt of them, is astonishing: If Salvation, and Church Communion, depended upon a *Metaphysical* Head, rather than an *Honest* Heart, it could hardly be more. I won't insist here upon the Prejudices of Education, a particular Turn of Mind, Bent of Studies, and Train of Thought; the want of Leisure in some, and

and of Capacity in others; or the many Considerations of a like Nature, which demand our Imitation of the Great GOD, in his *Compassion on the Ignorant, and on such as are out of the Way*: These have been frequently made use of in these Papers. But I desire to ask some Gentlemen, whether any Man gets to Heaven by *Doctrines* only, without their proper *Influence* upon the Heart and Life? Where is that Influence? Where are the Fruits of their Doctrines, while the Temper continues Cruel and Uncharitable? I would desire to be informed how necessary to Salvation some *Forms* of Words are, under which there is allow'd to be a Meaning not to be explain'd? To think that a fine *Picture* should satisfy a Man who is starving for *Bread*; to make a *Noise* to enlighten a *Room*; or call for a Cudgel to help a Man's Eye-sight; are Methods not more absurd, than to *quarrel* with one another, in order to satisfy a Hunger and Thirst after Knowledge, or to give a better Discernment of Things to the Mind. What has Quarrelling to do with Reasoning? And that too among Persons, who at a Time, and in Circumstances, which may be mentioned when Occasion serves, have been wont to exclaim against Divisions, upon account of different Apprehensions, as much as any in the World: Looking upon it to be a Thing as unreasonable as falling out, because one had *black* Eyes, and the other *grey*; one a *brown* Complexion, and another *fair*. Where are they who would die Martyrs for the Peace of the Church, as soon as for any Articles of its Truth?

When

When we ſpeak of Truth, the *Firſt* Thought that ariſes in a Man's Mind is, his own Opinion: The *Second* is, the method of Propagating it, and curing the Miſtake of a differing Neighbour. And here there are two ways: The *Orthodox*, which is by Evidence and Reaſon; and the *Heretical* way, which is by Force and Violence, Quarrelling and Miſchief, Slandering and Oppreſſing. For this I will call *Heretical*, however ſome who ſet up for the greateſt Orthodoxy may have fallen into it.

This is infinitely worſe than a Speculative Miſtake in Opinion. For ſuch a Miſtake can hurt no honeſt Soul, who has done his beſt to come at Truth: But the Method of Violence, Quarrelling and Miſchief, if mutually practiſed, (and why may not one Side practiſe it, as well as the Other, ſince each think themſelves in the right?) would ſet the World in a Flame, and deſtroy the Peace of Mankind.

Such is the ridiculous Eagerneſs of theſe Angry People, that they will hardly let a Man ſo much as ſuſpend a little, or enquire; nay, hardly ask a Queſtion. Or if he do raiſe and puſh an Objection a little, it is taken for a Declaration on the ſide of the Objection.

One would think the Meaning of *Hold faſt*, and *Contend earneſtly*, &c. was, that we muſt ſhut our Eyes as *cloſe as we can*, or elſe, clap on the *eſtabliſhed Spectacles*. Indeed, if I muſt

ſee

ſee by any other Eyes than my own, it ſhould be by thoſe who can ſhow the Way to the Emoluments of Church or State.

While I am treating of this Matter, I would particularly recommend to ſome Gentlemen, who are really Inquiſitive, and honeſtly deſirous of Truth, the following Advice: That after they have been reading on *both Sides*, and conſidering; have ſearched the *Scriptures*, and compared Things together; and have ſolemnly petition'd the *Father of Lights* to be directed in the right way; and then have carefully *Review'd* Things, and weigh'd all Circumſtances; (which is *trying all Things*, in order to *hold faſt that which is Good*;) I would recommend it to them, not to Imagine, that they can bring Perſons to the *ſame Concluſion*, and the ſame Thoughts with their own, in *a Day*; conſidering that they themſelves did not arrive to their preſent Senſe of Things, till after the continued Inquiries and Meditations of ſeveral Years. Even Light itſelf entring the Eye, with too ſudden a Blaze, bears too hard upon the Organ. You know the greateſt Teacher that ever was in the World, ſaid, *he had many Things to ſay, but they were not able then to bear them*. Don't imagine that common People, who han't your Leiſure, Opportunities, and Capacity, ſhould take in, all at a Flaſh, what you yourſelf did not compaſs, but after long Thoughts and Deliberation. It would be very abſurd to Quarrel with any, becauſe they do not Embrace *immediately*, what you have been working

yourselves into, by the gradual Proceedure of *some Years* Study and Reflection.

The Pretence of bringing Men to a Oneness of Expression in Matters of *Faith*, and Uniformity in the Way of *Worship*, has torn the Christian World into a thousand Pieces, and been the chief Engine of Division. Oh the *Tragedies* that this senseless Project has acted, even within the Pale of the *Church!* If any thing can aggravate the Vileness of this, it is to see a sort of Persons repeating the same Severities, as far as their feeble Powers can go, who have formerly smarted and roared out under the very Treatment they are ready now to give one another; and that on no other Account, but some Differences in *Speculative Opinions*.

What a learned Scuffle, was the Dispute *de Termino vitæ, fatali? an mobili?* between *Beverovicius*, and several learned Men of that Age? The Disquisition was pleasant and entertaining enough; the hard Names and Reflections thrown into it were Nonsence.

Many an honest Man does not see to the End of his own Principles; and many an honest Man had been an errant Villain, had he liv'd up to the Consequences of some Opinions, which he has heartily quarrel'd with Others for not embracing. The Doctrine of the *Grace* of GOD (the loveliest Subject one of them in the World) might have been a Principle of Concord, and charitable Forbearance,

bearance, had more of it dropt from the Controversy into the Habit and Temper; whereas, there are no kind of Controversies so inextinguishable as those, to which even the Grace of GOD has minister'd.

Whatever Controversy comes up, the like absurd Practice of *Quarrelling* comes along with it. Some won't think at all; some won't think Matters over again; some can't bear Opposition; some are honestly silly; some assert the *Scripture* to be the only Rule of Faith, with *one side of their Mouth*; and *humane Forms of Speech*, to be the Tests and Standards of Truth with the *Other*. The *Scripture* must be expounded by the *Fathers*; and by and by again, the *Fathers* must be judged by the *Scripture*. And because we must believe when GOD speaks *Mysteries*, we must also assent when Men talk *Nonsence*. And what Account can be given of these Things but what has lately been given? *viz.* "That "there are HIGH-CHURCHES, or LAU-"DEAN-CHURCHES, of ALL Denomina-"tions, which are always fighting for POWER "and DOMINION over the Consciences of "Men, among themselves; and always stri-"ving to swallow up one another."

Different Apprehensions in the Affair of the *Trinity*, have been always a plentiful Fund of Quarrel, when the good Sense of the Age had well nigh worn out all others. As Men of Craft and Design got Power, it was pronounc'd *Heresy* to speak of these Things in

other Words than what were dress'd up for the People. One while no Words are so excellent and eligible as *Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; another while, your subscribing to the whole Doctrine relating to this Matter, *in Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, signifies nothing. I would recommend to the Quarrelsome on all Sides in this Matter, the Words of *Melanchthon*; which, whether they may be read as an Observation, or a Prophecy, I refer to the Reader. They are in his Letter to* *Camerarius*. "Concerning the "TRINITY, You know I have always been "fearful, what might break out one time "or other. Good God! What *Tragedies* will "this Question excite in future Ages?——*Is* "*the* WORD *a* PERSON; *Is the* HOLY "GHOST *a* PERSON? I, for my Part, "will shew the greatest Regard to those Ex-"pressions of *Scripture*, that require a *Di-*"*vine Worship* to be pay'd to CHRIST; "which is to attribute to him the Honour of "his Divinity, and which is full of Consola-"tion. But it is not of such Importance, "nicely and strictly to search into the proper "No-

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Περὶ τῆς Τριάδος, Scis me semper veritum esse, fore ut hæc aliquando erumperent. Bone Deus! quales Tragœdias excitabit hæc Quæstio ad Posteros, ἢ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις ὁ λόγος, ἢ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις τὸ πνεῦμα? Ego me refero ad illas Scripturæ voces, quæ jubent invocare CHRISTUM, quod est ei honorem Divinitatis tribuere, & plenum Consolationis est. Τὰς δὲ ἰδίας τῶν ὑποστάσεων καὶ διαφορὰς ἀκριβῶς ζητεῖν ὁ πάνυ συμφέρει. Melanchthon Epist. lib. 4. Epist. 140. Edit. Lond.

" Notion of the ſeveral PERSONS, or to tell
" where the Difference and Diſtinction be-
" twixt them lies.

I ſhould heartily rejoice, if I could prevail with Thoſe, who are already too much heated about Speculations of this Nature, to ſit ſtill and cool a little; and then, if further Debates ſhould be thought requiſite, to manage 'em fairly, and with Temper, and to reſolve above all things to *put on Charity*; that we may not run into *freſh Diviſions* when the Wiſdom of the Legiſlature is purſuing Expedients for removing *Thoſe already occaſion'd.*

However, if there ſhould be no preventing or remedying theſe kinds of Diviſions, yet if ſome others (which are of much more Importance to the Publick at preſent) might but be cur'd or hinder'd, I ſhould be content to let the *Speculative Prize-Fighters* e'en go on their own way: There are no Diviſions of ſuch dangerous Conſequence, that can ariſe from their Squabbles, as thoſe which accompany and follow Mens *Ambition and Intriegues for Power and Preferment in the State.* The Diviſions which ſpring from hence are generally obſerv'd to be the worſt of all.

When a Luſt of Power, or covetous Thirſt for Gain, is what principally guides Men's Views and Actions; the Peace of Society, and the good Harmony among Neighbours and fellow Citizens, in which the Welfare and Strength of a People conſiſts, muſt be ſacrificed

sacrificed to private Ends, and be disturbed by Animosities that naturally arise from clashing Interests and mutual Resentments. All Things must then be wrong both in Church and State, that will not admit of their *sole* Management, or *supreme* Direction. And every one must be first an Enemy, and then to be sure as bad a Man as artful Malice can make him, who either has what They *want*, or can stand in Competition with them for what They *aim at*. It is generally found, that the best Men, for this very Reason, meet with Opposition and Scandal in an almost Mathematical Proportion to their Virtues and good Qualities. For all those Virtues must be spurn'd in the Dust, that will not be made the Steps of their Ambition; especially, that chance to oppose, or would prevent it. Now, where such Persons happen to interfere (and interfere They must some Time or other, wherever They are) all that can be enrolled in the Friendship and Interests of One, are thereby inlisted as implacable Enemies to the Other. One would have thought the large Extent of the *Roman* Empire, in the Times of *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, sufficient for the Ambition of two Men, that They might have lived in good Amity Themselves, and Their several Friends have lived together as *Romans* and Fellow-Citizens: But when one could not bear an *Equal*, nor the Other a *Superior*, the whole World must be engag'd to decide their Quarrel. *Anthony* and *Augustus* may agree, while They are both concern'd to crush the Power of *Brutus* and *Cassius*; but with

with two such Spirits, the Victory at *Philippi* only makes way for the Battle of *Actium*. When They have fought it once together, to destroy the common Enemy, They must fight it over again afterward among Themselves, to know to whom the Prize of the Victory belongs. When such Divisions are begun, it is hardly possible to heal them, or make them up. *Brutus* and *Cassius* may have a Dagger for *Cæsar*; but *Anthony* and *Augustus* will have Armies for Them; and in a short Time, They will have a Sword for Each Other: And in the Conclusion, a *Livia* may have Skill and Management enough, to defeat the Family of *Augustus* of the Succession, and fix it on her own Son *Tiberius*. The same evil Effects, in a proportionate Degree, follow upon the lesser Ambitions of inferior Persons, whether in Church or State. Though They cannot engage such numerous Parties, and cause such extensive Mischiefs; yet They can destroy the Peace of the Places where They live, render useless all the Virtues of modest Men, and by the Invention of *new* Differences, or the dextrous Management of *former ones*, excite Men to hate and worry Each Other: And this too, when entirely ignorant of the true Reason why; yea, if They knew it, would be ashamed many of Them to be so grosly imposed upon. For this Reason it was a just Remark of Baron *Puffendorff*, that all Controversies, where Interest and Power are concern'd, seem irreconcileable: * "Ast ubi Controversis

* De Consensu & Diss. inter Protestantes. *p.* 36.

" troversis Dogmatibus innexa sunt Emolu-
" menta, seu ubi ad conservandam Potentiam,
" ac Opes quærendas, Dogmata inventa aut
" attemperata sunt; non est quod credamus
" disputando ac ratiocinando illas posse everti,
" saltem apud Eos quorum peculiariter In-
" teresst." 'Tis plain in all such Cases, no Argument can be allowed Good that concludes against their *Profit* and *Power*. These Divisions, among other Mischiefs, have brought in a sort of inverted *Logick*; By which the Truth of the *Conclusion* is not to be determined by the Reason or Truth of the *Premises*; but the Truth of the *Premises* by the Conveniency or Advantage of the *Conclusion*. Nor is it to be wonder'd at, that Men should make thus bold with the Rules of speculative Reason, upon the same Account They daily make bold with all the Rules of moral Reason; or that They should sacrifice Truth to that Ambition, to which They have already sacrificed Justice and Honesty. But this must sure give All, who are concern'd either for Truth or for Honesty and Peace, an Abhorrence of such Maxims and Practices. It should make Men careful to examine how it comes to pass, that some, who have apparently no Religion at all, should nevertheless be very forward Champions for a *Church*, and extremely Jealous of every Danger, and the only Persons who can see it at an invisible Distance. Suppose They were for once to examine their favourite Notions, by their own real System of *Logick*; and consider what these Divisions were made for at first,

first, and what They have been continued for ever since; They would then find out the true Conclusion They aim at, and by which all their Opinions are to be proved and made Good. For Instance; The *Church* is said to be in *Danger* really for this Reason, " because " some Men want the Government of it, and " the best Preferments in it." The whole Administration of the *State* is said to be in *bad Hands*, for this true Reason, " that the Com- " plainants have it not in their Own." And 'tis certain these Men must ever be of the same Opinion, while the same Reason lasts. But whether the mischievous Tendency of such Divisions, with the Authors and Fomenters of Them, do not deserve the Resentment of every honest Man, Every honest Man himself may be Judge. And can an honest Man ever think of dividing with such Persons, or making one in a Company, where They give Motion to it and direct it? It appears to all, who can see into the Truth of this Case, that it would be less mischievous, and full out as honest and honourable, to take a Purse on the High-way, or break open an House, as thus by Party-Scandal to rob Innocent, Useful and Modest Persons of their Reputation; or, for the sake of private Interest, or out of private Ambition, to break the *General Peace* of *Church* and *State*.

Where Persons of the First Rank, and such as are employ'd in publick Offices near the Throne, become divided in their Views, or in those Regards which One Challenges to

himſelf, in Oppoſition to another, many and great are the Calamities that muſt enſue. By diſagreeing Views and Deſigns great Uneaſineſs is created to the Prince; and unavoidable Diſappointment, or Delay, is occaſion'd to the Services he expects, The Officers of the Crown are the *King's* immediate Servants in his great Province, the Adminiſtration of the Government; the *Eyes*, by which, in many Caſes, he muſt ſee, as well as the *Hands* by which he muſt act; If they convey *contrary* Notices of Things, it muſt leave their Maſter in a Fluctuation and Uncertainty of Counſels and Meaſures. And if they are purſuing different Aims, it cannot fail to produce either a fickle and unſteady Conduct in the Management of the State, by their pointing different ways; or elſe, put the publick Affairs to a ſtand, and obſtruct a quick Diſpatch of Buſineſs, by one's ſetting it backward, as much as the other would carry it forward. And therefore no wiſe Prince will chooſe a *Motley Miniſtry*, who are in different Intereſts, and have Deſigns directly oppoſite to one another; But an entire Set of Men, as far as they can be had, who are diſpoſed intently to purſue the ſame Ends with himſelf. Thoſe who have made the Experiment of ſuch a diſcordant Union of Servants, in Compliance with the Humours of the People, or ſome apprehended Neceſſity of Affairs, have hardly ever fail'd to repent of it; and have found themſelves oblig'd, either to return to a more uniform Adminiſtration, by

Hands

Hands they liked, or to throw themſelves entirely into Hands they would not chuſe.

But if a Miniſtry ſhould be ever ſo Harmonious in their Principles and Publick Views, a good Prince may ſuffer as much, and be as ill ſerved, by occaſion of their ſcandalous Factions and Conteſts for *Superiority* of Power, and Honour, and Advantage, as by their directly thwarting his Meaſures. No good Subject can think, without Diſdain and Indignation, of the Uneaſineſs which is ſometimes given to a moſt indulgent Prince, by the untoward Humours, and violent Squabbles of thoſe who have the neareſt acceſs to his Perſon, about their own petty Intereſts: When, it may be, all their Significancy is owing to his Favour; and they would have been in no capacity to make any Pretenſion, if he had not raiſed them from the Duſt. It makes one's Blood riſe, to think of Men upon whom the Crown has but too liberally heap'd the Marks of Bounty and Favour; yet ſacrificing the Peace, and Eaſe, and Intereſt of their Sovereign to their own childiſh Reſentments, or to their unbounded Ambition and Covetouſneſs. How often is this the Caſe! Every one ſtruggles to be at the Helm; and, unſatisfied with the Station he is placed in, employs all his Thought and Zeal in graſping at more than he is poſſeſs'd of: And in this Colliſion of proud and petulant Men, thoſe Sparks fly about, that ſet fire to a Train of miſchievous Schemes and Practices, and ſometimes endanger the blow-

ing up of a whole Adminiſtration. When Servants are thus buſied in provoking or undermining, and quarrelling with One Another, their Maſters Affairs are neglected. There is a Feebleneſs in all their Publick Proceedings, by reaſon of private Grudges. They are no longer ſubſervient to One Another, in the Machine of Government, to promote a quick and regular Motion: But Counſels are diſconcerted, Buſineſs is at a ſtand, or goes on in a confuſed and uncertain manner; and their Sovereign bears the Reproach and Inconvenience of their Male-conduct.

Nor can the ill Influence of this fail to ſpread it ſelf into the Community, when there is a Prince at the Helm, who has it in his Intention to do all the *Good* he can to his People. Indeed when there is a Prince, who aims at the Eſtabliſhment of *Arbitrary Power*, and the Invaſion of the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects, it is happy for them when his Counſels are broken and divided: These different and jarring Intereſts among the great Men he employs, may ſave a People from Ruin, who could hardly fail to become a Sacrifice to more united Meaſures; or at leaſt, it may protract and delay their Miſeries. This was one Thing that gave time for the glorious *Revolution* by King WILLIAM; and for as great and happy a *Reſtoration* of our Affairs by King GEORGE's Acceſſion. But when a Prince is in the Intereſt of his Country, the Community muſt ſuffer in all *that*, which

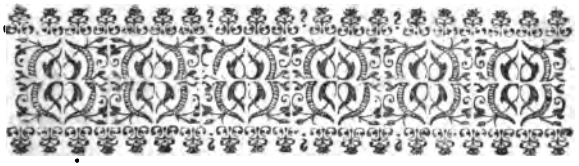
which gives the Head of it Uneasiness, Difficulty, or Disappointment. Such Divisions among his Servants only keep from his People those Blessings, which, as a *Common Father*, he designs them.

The Enemies of their *King* and *Country*, take heart from the Animosities they observe among those, who by their Stations are expected to be the chief Supports of Both: They resume new Courage to practise their Arts against a divided State, and too often succeed in their ill Wishes. A Spirit of Division is apt to descend also to the rest of the People, and Factions to be multiplied and grow inveterate under the Shelter of contending Ministers. The Character of a Prince, and of a Nation, suffers at the same time in the Opinion of Neighbouring Powers: Those inclined to Friendship, know not how to place a Confidence in them; and their Enemies readily take the Advantage to give them Disturbance.

I'll say but one Thing more, which I doubt with most Statesmen is likely to have greater Weight than the Consideration either of their Sovereign, or their Country; that their Divisions are often of great Disservice, yea of fatal Consequence to *Themselves*. It doubles their own Cares and Fatigues; and makes them to be perpetually haunted with the pains of Jealousy, or oppress'd with repeated Mortifications. And tho' a generous Prince may run an uncommon length of Forbearance with

with them; yet if they go on to purſue their Quarrels, to diſtreſs the Government, and clog the Wheels of publick Buſineſs, they muſt be infatuated if they think any Prince will be content always to live in a Fire of their making. No, he will procure his own Eaſe, and the Satisfaction of his People, by diſmiſſing them to Privacy and Silence; and ſurely they muſt fall unpitied. Then poſſibly, when both the contending Parties are juſtly turned *out*, becauſe neither could be contented *in*, it may be no difficulty to bring about their Reconciliation: In the Time of their common Diſgrace they may come to a better Agreement; but when it is too late to recover either the Favour of their *injured Prince*, or to retrieve that *common Intereſt* which they gave up to their private Contentions.

A LET-



A LETTER TO THE Author of the *Occasional Paper*.

SIR,

IF it may any way suit the Subject of your next Paper, and if you have room for it, I wish you would some where or other insert the following *Quotation*, out of Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Sermon, preach'd at *Guild-Hall* Chapel, *September* 21, 1673.

That celebrated Author, speaking of *some Things* practis'd among the *Papists*, which may deserve *our Imitation*, particularly mentions *Their lessening of Differences among Themselves*, upon which He thus writes: " Altho' " with all their Care they cannot *prevent* " Differences, yet they still endeavour to *ex-* " *tenuate* them, as much as possible; and " boast of their *Unity*, among Strangers, to " their Church's Affairs. The great Wisdom " of

" of the *Court* of *Rome* lies in this, that as long
" as Persons are true to Them in the *main*
" *Points*, wherein the Difference lies, they can
" let them alone in *smaller Differences* among
" themselves; and not provoke either of the
" Dissenting Parties, unless they are sure to
" suppress them, lest they give them occa-
" sion to withdraw from their Communion.
" They can allow different *Rites* and *Cere-*
" *monies* in the several *Orders* of Religion
" among them; and grant Exemptions and Pri-
" vileges in particular Cases; as long as they
" make them serviceable to their common
" Interest, by upholding and strengthening
" them. Would to GOD we could at last
" learn *this Wisdom* from our Enemies, not
" to *widen our own Differences by inveterate*
" *Heats, Bitterness, and Animosities among our-*
" *selves*; *but to find out Ways whereby the Dis-*
" *senters, in smaller Things, may be made useful*
" *for the maintaining the common Interest of our*
" *Church and Religion.*

FINIS.

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. VIII.

Some farther

THOUGHTS UPON DIVISIONS.

To which is added,

A LETTER to the *Author*, ON The PAPER, Numb. V. concerning *The Abuse of Liberty.*

LONDON:

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Some Farther

THOUGHTS

UPON

DIVISIONS.

MY *last Subject* affords such a variety of Thoughts, that I hope the Reader will not be displeas'd to meet with a *Second Paper* upon it.

The *Divisions*, which of late have prevail'd among us, are too many to be numbred: The *Church*, the *State*, publick *Societies*, and private *Families* have all greatly suffered by them: And it is a Wonder They have not produced much greater Calamities than as yet They have. If They are continued in, and no sufficient and effectual Methods can be found out to heal them; we all know what must be the final State of a *Kingdom*, or *a House divided against itself*.

But as we now find many *healing Principles* bravely advanced, and gloriously defended, by the best of *Writers*; and some *healing Attempts* triumphing against all Opposition in the Proceedings of our *Legislature*; I cannot but Hope we are in the Way to a more general good Agreement among our selves, and to a more happy Settlement of Things, than has hitherto been brought about in these Nations. Whatever our *Differences* may be, though *Old Ones* may remain, or *New Ones* arise, those will not hurt us, could we once learn to make Allowances for Each Other, and not give way to divided Views of Interest, or to divided Affections for Parties, as we have done.

And now, whilst the *outward* Occasions of our Divisions are removing, let us also do what we can to take away the *inward* Motives and Springs of all our Contests and Animosities: For if the *Causes of Divisions*, which lie in Mens *Tempers*, be not applied to, we are like to reap but very little Benefit by taking away This or the Other Occasion of Offence. If a quarrelsome, envious, discontented, imposing, proud Spirit is still indulged, Men will find out something or other to raise Disputes about, and to justify themselves in their Vilifying and Hating One another; But cure this, and our Divisions would soon be at an End.

" It

"It is not (says the late Bishop of *Sarum* *) "the Differences themselves that keep us asun- "der, they are too inconsiderable for that;" ('tis certain that in a multitude of Instances They are so;) "it is a *Secret Dislike* that we "bear One to Another.——Our Subjects of "Dispute are only the Occasions by which "our *Uncharitableness* works; and if by bring- "ing ourselves to a more Christian Temper, "that *hidden Disease* were once cured, all the "*Symptoms* of it would fall off of themselves; "and Men would grow ashamed that they "had ever spent so *much* Time, and so *much* "Zeal, about Things which deserve them so "*little*,

'Tis certain that the great Cause of all our Divisions is *Pride*. ONLY *by Pride* (says *Solomon*) *comes Contention*. This is some way or other concern'd in all our Quarrels; and were it possible to suppress this, we should either never *begin*, or should quickly *cease* to contend and fall out. 'Tis Pride that puts *Superiors* upon requiring or expecting those Things from such as are *below* them, which are often very justly refused. And 'tis Pride that puts *Inferiors* upon such a Behaviour towards those that are *above* them, as justly excites Displeasure and Resentment. 'Tis Pride that makes Men, whom Nature and Providence have set upon a *Level*, continually strive who shall be the *Greatest*. 'Tis Pride that makes some *give* Offence,

* *Exhortation to Peace and Unity.*

least; who shall be in Repute, and who shall lie under Infamy and Disgrace; who shall be dignified, and who shall be despised, in the present Life. And All of them shew too much that they are the *Successors* of the *Apostles* in this, —— *Contending who shall be the greatest*. Would but this *Order of Men* (for whom I am apt to exceed in my Respect) Study and Practise more that Direction of their great *Master*, when He wash'd His *Disciples Feet*, —— *that They also should so wash One Another's*; They would be better dispos'd to keep up a mutual Respect among Themselves, and I am sure would be ten times more honour'd by the World than they are. And would they *first* set an Example of subduing a disuniting dividing *Pride*, I doubt not this would soon be followed by many Others.

Tho' I must confess, it is one of the main Disorders and Infelicities of the present Age, that many of the *meanest Rank*, and of *inferior Capacities*, are puffed up with a Pride that is become almost past dealing with. Some of the most contemptible Creatures among us, yet think themselves sufficient to direct *Statesmen*, dictate to *Legislators*, and teach *Doctors* and *Divines*. They are not content with imagining themselves in the right, as to their own Opinion and Conduct; (for when Conscience does not remonstrate against a Man, he may conclude he is right, his own Understanding being his immediate Guide, by Divine Constitution;) but they will needs pass their Sentiments and Measures upon Others. This is the Pride that makes some Men intolerable, that

that they cannot be satisfied in Thinking for *Themselves*, but they will needs be Thinking for *All about them.* And when once a Man comes to this, some are treated as if they had *no* Understanding at all, and others as if they were obliged to *resign* what they have to *his* Judgment and Direction. And if all else were as tame and resigning, as he is assuming and arrogant, the World might be easy: But such a Man finding Others as proud as he is; as opinionated of Themselves, as willing to be Superior, and to have Command as he is; Quarrelling is unavoidable betwixt such. Neither will resign his Claims, and therefore Each resolves to carry his Point, by Force: And having form'd an Expectation, that Compliance should have been yielded without Dispute, he afterwards becomes eager to extort it. Then a Party must be made, and Friends and Dependants on both Sides listed, and the Point must be determined by the *stronger Party.* Thus many times a Trifle shall be contended for, with as much Heat and Fury as a Matter of the last Importance. And very often we see, that it is not so much the Thing in contest which keeps up the Quarrel, as a *Punctilio* of false and mistaken Honour. Nor is it a Debate who is in the *right*, so much as who shall *give way*; that is, in reality, who shall shew himself the *wiser* Man.

Let *Interest* at any time come in to support a proud and stiff Temper, it then hugely widens the Distance betwixt Men, and inflames their Passions. Men are generally ob-

serv'd to be mighty *selfish* Creatures, and to think nothing of so much Importance in itself, or so worthy their Regard, as their *own* Interests; and in many Cases they are swayed by their *petty* Interests too. They will prefer them to Truth, to Justice, to Peace, to the Publick Welfare, and in a manner to every thing. Where is the Person in whom a Sense of his own Interest is always maintain'd, just as it ought to be, and no farther?

n.b.

Can any thing be more evident, than that a Regard to private Interest lies at the Bottom of most of the Discords and Quarrels in the World? Let Men pretend what they will, they are not commonly transported into such a Warmth of Temper by a Zeal for Truth, for pure Religion, or for the publick Welfare; as for Pre-eminence, Dominion, Wealth, and Secular Advantages: From hence the most deadly Feuds are raised in all Communities. It is not because the Government is dishonour'd, or ill serv'd by Those in Place, that Others rail at them, raise Clamours against them, and do all they can to heave them out; but, if possible, that they might get into their Places. On the other Hand, it is not so much because Men out of Power are Enemies to the Publick, that Others endeavour to disgrace and ruine them; as because They are dangerous Rivals, and such as bid fair some time or other to gain their Posts. It is not because Men have a Concern for the Church, that it is so often in their Mouths, and They hold a Knife to the Throats of Those who

who will not bellow for it as loudly as themselves; but because by this Craft they secure their Gains; and by the Charm of one Word not understood, lord it over Others, and lead them to serve what Purposes they please. Nor is it always, because Men hate Persecution, that they set up for the Advocates of Liberty, and cry down Violence in Matters of Religion; but it is because they have some present Need for this Liberty, and when They have served their Turn, can upon Occasion bear hard upon Others, and wipe their Mouths, and say they have done no Wrong.

Could Men be perswaded to prefer the publick Peace and Welfare to their own private Advantage, how well would it be with us? Let Fame, or Honour, or Authority, or Wealth be sought after only in Subordination to Things of greater Moment; and whilst every Man claims his *own* Rights, let Others also be allow'd Theirs; and let none either value themselves, or seek themselves beyond what is fit; and then the present Tumults of the World would in a great measure be still'd, and a happy Calm would spread itself through the Churches of Christ, and over the Face of the Earth.

I said, that we should obtain a *great Measure* of Peace by thus regulating the Views and Aims of our own Interest; but we shall not thoroughly compass a quiet and settled State, till the *natural Fretfulness* of

ſome Mens Tempers, and the ſudden *violent Paſſions* of Others are alſo corrected and reſtrained. Some Perſons have their Blood ſo fill'd with *Acids*, that if Reaſon and Principle do not very carefully watch the Conſtitution, They will ever be upon the Fret: And if by Calamities and Diſappointments the Spirit ſhould be farther ſoured, it will be hard to live peaceably with ſuch. Very Trifles will make theſe Men uneaſy. And when there is no foreign Matter of Vexation, they will be fretted with Themſelves, and diſcontented and quarrelſome, not from any juſt Reaſon, but from unhappy Inclination. Theſe Spirits, upon every little Difference, will run into Diſcord, and the worſt Inſtances of Spite, Defiance, and Hoſtility. They will bear no Contradiction: But take Fire in a moment, and give Fire to all the combuſtible Matter within their Reach; till at laſt, all blaze out at once in a waſting Flame.

Others, though not ſo naturally peeviſh, yet are *violently Paſſionate*: either fir'd on a *ſudden* into mighty Fits of Rage; or fill'd with a Reſentment that goes deeper, and a Revenge that ſits brooding on the Mind. Hence it comes to paſs, that innumerable Miſchiefs are ſometimes hatch'd out of little Differences and Debates. When Anger and Revenge have full Poſſeſſion of the Thoughts, who can be anſwerable for the Conſequence? They are Murder and all

all manner of Miseries in *Embryo*: And 'tis no Wonder that Broils should hereby be produced in all kinds of Communities, both Civil and Sacred.

I know no Remedy against the Divisions which will thus arise from the Texture of the Blood, but to take care that such Men mingle with Societies and Bodies of People as little as may be. The more they are left *alone*, the better will the Peace and Quiet of Those about them be secur'd: Unless they should learn to rule their own Spirits, and then they may be the fitter to rule and deal with the disorderly Spirits of others.

But after all, there is one very common and prevailing Cause of Divisions, which is most reproachful and unreasonable to continue from Age to Age; and that is *Suspicion* and *Jealousy*. Men put wrong Meanings upon one another's Expressions, and wrong Designs upon one another's Actions: And though each of them deny the Consequences which the other would make necessary, yet they will not be brought to Credit one another, or to give up the Debates between them. Thus sometimes very small Differences, and those only speculative Ones, shall be improv'd by a *suspicious Jealous* Temper, so as to be big with all manner of Mischiefs. This produces very hot Words, and dreadful Charges of Things, never so much as thought of perhaps by the Party accus'd. And there is so much *Jealousy* in Humane Na-

Nature, that wherever this is set on work, it will go on with *May-be's*, till a Man is quite lost to the true and just View of Things, and full of mistaken and frightful Apprehensions. This too is so spreading and infectious an Evil, that the Suspicions of *One* shall presently take hold of a *Hundred*; and then they strengthen One Another in their false Conceptions. Like a Flock of *Geese* that are at Rest, no sooner does *One* make a Noise, as if some Danger was at Hand, but all presently set a *Gaggling*, and put themselves in motion, though it be one of the most *harmless Creatures* in the World that is passing by. *Virgil* imputes the discordant Management of *Citizens* in their making Parties against One Another, to their undue Fears.

Exoritur trepidos inter Discordia Cives.
Æn. lib. 12.

And our famous Poet *Hudibras* has made this the Rise of our *Civil Wars* in *England*:

When hard Words, Jealousies, and Fears
Set Folks together by the Ears.

It were earnestly to be wish'd some Way or other might be found out, to prevent the Regards those *Incendiaries* meet with, who are ever creating Disturbances, by their *Jealousies* and *Suspicions*. This Temper is *cruel* as the *Grave*: And there is no Possibility of fencing against the mischievous Effects and Influences of it, but by

by rooting out, and bringing into the utmost Contempt, the Temper itself.

And methinks, if every Man would but study his own Make, and observe his Inclinations to Society, and what a constitutional Fondness there is to Those of his own Kind; He must be put upon doing his utmost to rectify those Disorders which break, and disappoint those pleasurable Workings of Nature. Men love to have the good Opinion of Others, and cannot help some kind of Sympathy, and are never so easy as when they are upon good Terms with all about them: There is an inexpressible Pleasure in mutual Freedom and Confidence; and in passing good Offices amongst them. So that if this Disposition was well attended to, it would make Men continually seek out Expedients to improve it, rather than run into the least Quarrels or Divisions.

Divisions among associated Bodies of Men, engaged to One Another by natural Ties of Duty and Interest, and strengthened by Compacts and Stipulation, is unnatural and absurd: Like the Members of the same Body quarrelling and contending with One Another, or desiring to be separated and cut off from the Body, which they are made to serve, and which is the Life and Support of each.

For this very Reason Men combine together, and come into the several Forms of Government

vernment under which they live, to ſecure Themſelves againſt common Dangers, and promote the general Welfare, together with the Welfare of each Individual, beyond what could be done in a ſingle and ſeparate State. But Diviſion deſtroys the original Deſign of Civil Government, and croſſes the firſt Intention of it. 'Tis highly *Impolitick*; for it diſables powerful Bodies, and renders Them weak by dividing Them; like a Mutiny in a victorious Army, or a Body of Horſe wedg'd together, which can't be overcome till ſeparated from One Another. It diſcourages the Undertaking, diſturbs the Execution, and hazards the Succeſs of every generous and noble Attempt to ſecure the Safety, and promote the Proſperity of a People. It tends to diſpirit Them, and render Them like a hale Conſtitution exhauſted and emaciated by painful and pining Diſtempers; They become Weak and Languid, uncapable of any vigorous Action, or great Performance, upon any Occaſion.

A People united in their main Intereſts, and acting in concert, will make a noble Stand againſt a powerful Invader; and repel and turn a mighty Torrent; As the antient *Britains* in this Iſland, though rude and undiſciplined, vigorouſly oppoſed and repulſed the firſt Attempts of *Julius Cæſar* and the *Roman* Forces; and We ſaw the Power of Union at the *Revolution*, when the Whole Kingdom acted as One Man, and with One Heart. But when People are weakned by Diviſions among Themſelves, can-

cantoned into Parties and Factions, mutually opposing One Another, and driving on different Designs; what prodigious Advantage do they give a common Enemy! How exposed to be practised upon, and how easy a Prey to artful Malice! What has been more frequent, than for a crafty and intrieguing Adversary, in a divided State of Things, to insinuate Himself into both Parties, under a false Disguise and fair Pretence? How easy has he found it to strengthen unreasonable Prejudices, and enflame Mens Passions against One Another? To give a wrong Turn of Mind, and false View of Things; to strike the proper Vein, push on a prevailing Humour, and run Things to Extremity. Thus a cunning Adversary will easily practise upon a divided People; so as to prevent the most hopeful Attempts of Accommodation, and even widen the Difference; and set Them at a greater Distance than ever.

Union has been always esteemed a Mark of Wisdom, as well as a Means of Power: It raises the Character and Reputation of a Kingdom, and makes it appear *Formidable*, at the same time 'tis *Beautiful* and *Lovely*: In the Language of the *Sacred Poet*, 'tis to look *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun*, and at the same time *terrible as an Army with Banners*: But various Counsels, unconcerted Measures, different Views, and open Discord, sink the Credit as well as weaken the Strength. It lessens the Figure a Body of Men would otherwise make in the World, and lightens

 their

their Weight in the Ballance of Power. They become Despicable and Mean, and the very Jest and Scorn of their Neighbours: And those who hate them, are so far from having any thing to fear from their Proceedings, that they only wait with a malicious Pleasure, to see Them bring about their own Ruin.

Indeed nothing tends more directly to the Dissolution of the best Constitution in the World, than Divisions among the Members of it. Hereby the Bands of Civil Society are loosened, which hold all altogether; and the Foundation upon which it stands is undermin'd. Divisions are of a growing Nature, and with the least Countenance, or even Neglect, mightily spread and increase; like Weeds in a rank Soil: And when a Kingdom is divided in Two, and comes to have almost equal Parts, like a Globe cut in half, there will be near equal Strength on each Side: Then Things come to open Ruptures and fatal Struggles, then commence Civil Wars. Then Fellow-Citizens imbrue their Hands in One Another's Blood, and triumph in One Another's Ruin. This produces Changes of Government, Destruction of Liberty, and introduces Tyranny and Slavery. The Constitution is broke, and the whole Benefit of Government lost, or Things are fix'd upon an ill Foot, and Misery entail'd upon Posterity.

The Divisions among the Nobles and Commons of *Athens* and *Rome*, destroyed those powerful Commonwealths; and Divisions among the *Jews* ruined their Affairs, when *Jerusalem*

lem was besieged and taken by *Titus Vespasian*. And if we look into modern History, and the present State of the World, we shall find that Divisions have altered the Constitutions, and lost the Liberty, of most of the Countries of *Europe*. We are almost the single Instance to the contrary; and our Divisions, more than once, have look'd very threatning, and bid fair for the Overthrow of our Constitution.

If we consider our selves as a *Christian* Society, or Collection of Men professing the *Christian Religion*, united under one Civil Government, then a dividing Spirit is most contrary to the Laws and Spirit of the Christian Institution; which is so peculiarly above all others, proper to inspire Men with Sentiments of Peace, and universal Love. 'Tis calculated to subdue unruly Passions, and breed a Composure in every Breast. Love and Peace are the very Genius and Temper of the Gospel. And though I don't find it meddles with the Constitution of Kingdoms, or Forms of Government; but leaves These as it found them, upon the Foot of the Law of Nature, and the different Constitution of the several Countries: Yet the Christian Doctrine binds down the Duties of every Relation, and strengthens the Obligations: As the just and merciful Behaviour of Governors; the dutiful Demeanor of Subjects; and the peaceable Carriage of all Men towards One Another.

The Apostles require *Subjection to the higher Powers, not only for Wrath, but Conscience sake*: and *submitting our selves to every Ordinance of Man*

for the LORD's *sake.* Not *to resist* the Power, because 'tis an *Ordinance of* GOD, and to pay *Tribute.* And we are every-where required to *follow Peace with all Men*, and as *far as possible* to *live peaceably with All.* The great *Founder* of our Religion submitted to the *Civil Constitution*, when He was here on Earth; readily payed the publick *Taxes* for Himself and his Disciples; and never broke any Humane *Law* in any *lawful* Instance. And the Apostles in all Matters of a Civil Nature, readily obeyed; tho', in the Matters of their GOD, their Maxim was, *'Tis better to obey* GOD *than Man.* So that Divisions and Contentions among People is an unchristian Wickedness, utterly disowned, and entirely contrary to the *Gospel*, in all the Lights and Views of it; to the Precepts, and Spirit, and all the Precedents of it. I only add, 'tis always so in its proper Nature and first Design, and genuine Tendency; and 'tis never otherwise, but when accidentally, and by the greatest Abuse, 'tis made an Occasion of the contrary.

I know there are some who will impute our *Divisions* to that *Liberty*, which as *Englishmen*, and *Christians*, and *Protestants*, I have pleaded for: But it might be sufficient to answer all that is offer'd on that Subject, to refer my Reader to the Vth Paper of this Volume, which was written on purpose to prevent the *Abuse of Liberty*: However, I shall here take Occasion to publish a *Letter* from one of my Correspondents, upon reading that Paper, which may perhaps give farther Weight to what is there said.

TO

TO THE

Author of the *Occasional Paper*.

SIR,

I Was extreamly pleased with your late *Paper* upon *the Abuse of Liberty*. I have long thought something of that Kind requisite, and am glad you undertook it: For I am persuaded no Man could do it better. The most popular Pretence against *Liberty of private Judgment* is the very *common Abuse* of it. But you have effectually removed that Objection, by guarding against every thing of that kind. And, provided Men keep within the Rules you have prescribed, it is impossible that this Consequence should ever follow upon it. If indeed they will give way to *Pride*, and *Humour*, and *Obstinacy*, and *Pragmaticalness*, and *Self-Conceit*, it is not to be avoided; but otherwise there will be no Room to fear it. And indeed the very best Things in the World have been, or at least may be, abused by such vicious and disorderly Workings of Mens Spirits.

Go on therefore, *Sir*, with your Defence of *Liberty*. You may do it with more Safety now than you could before. I love a *Catholick Spirit* at my Heart; and therefore have taken in your *Papers* from the very first, and recommended 'em to others too. They breathe a Spirit so Good and Christian, that I am tempted

ted to wish they came out oftner. Every *Protestant*, as such, is indebted to you, and the *Dissenting* ones particularly. This *Religious Liberty* is one of the greatest Blessings we have, without which *Life* itself is of no Consideration; nay, rather a *Burden* than a *Happiness*. And as for the *Dignity* of our Nature, that we are apt, and that very justly, to value our selves upon, what is it when this is taken away? We might as well have been *Brutes*; nay, better, if we must not exercise the *Capacities*, and enjoy the *Rights* of our Nature. And I would thank that Man that would deprive me of my Reason, at the same time that he would confine my Thoughts and regulate my Principles for me: And till he can do the former, I think he should not attempt the latter. Nor will he do it, unless it be with a Design to make me the most *Contemptible* and *Miserable* of all Beings. If he would show his *Malice* and *Ill-Nature* to the utmost, then indeed he takes a Course proper enough to pretend to judge for me, and to punish me for not allowing him to do so: But to do it for my *Good*, as he pretends, is something too wild and absurd to be believed. It's *Barbarity* and not *Kindness*, and one of the most unaccountable Ways of shewing *Friendship* in the World, and the most to be suspected of any. And as for the propagating of *Truth* this Way, it is a perfect Jest, and what all wise Men laugh at; all the *Reason* and *Experience* in the World lying quite the other Way. And I will be bold to say, that the *Truth* which is propagated by *Severity* of any sort, let it be of what Consequence it will, can never make amends for the

the Injury done by such *Means* of propagating it. Nor would the *Error* prevented thereby, do half the Mischief as the *Method* of preventing it does. In short, the *Means*, if they don't entirely defeat the *End*, as they generally do; yet lessen the *Advantage* of it very much. So that it is as good, nay better, for the World to be without *Truth*, than to come by it on such *hard Terms*. And it would do less Disservice for Men to be left in an *Error*, than to be cured of it this Way. The Remedy is worse a Thousand Times than the Disease.

Good God! when shall Men learn of Thee the Method of propagating *Truth*, and take the Way that thou thyself dost! When shall they imitate thine Example here, the Wisdom of which lies in its Gentleness, and Kindness, and Sweetness, and its Suitableness to the Nature of Man, and its Conducivenes to the Interests of Society, and its Aptness to promote the End!

But it is pretended by some, that *Severity* does not take away *private Judgment*, but rather promote it, by quickning a Person to think more closely and thoroughly of Things than before. That is, in short, chaining a Person to a Post does not abridge him of his Liberty, but rather enlarge it. *Risum teneatis Amici!* It's amazing to hear Men talk at this Rate. And I would ask these Gentlemen what they would do with the Man, that is by this Method brought to think more closely and thoroughly than before, if after all he is of the same Mind that he was before? Will they

take

take off the Penalty he lies under? No; They don't say that they will, or give us any room to hope that they will: but rather they'll *increase* it, to make him think more closely and thoroughly still; and so on to the End of the Chapter. To what Purpose then is it for a Man to think closely and thoroughly, when tho' he does it never so much, if still he remains in the same Mind as he was at first, he is still *Fined*, and *Imprisoned*, and *Outlawed*, and *Excommunicated*? So that all this is but sham, and they had better say, as I am sure they mean, that the true Design of Severity is to prevent all *private Judgment*. And this indeed is what some will not stick to assert, and therein act a more honest Part, because a more open and undisguised one than others. But the fatal Consequences of this they would do well to consider.

I could enlarge much upon this Head, but I am loth to take up too much Room in your *Paper*, or be any Hindrance to yourself and others, that can fill it up much better than I can pretend to. If this will contribute any thing to your Design, or if I can do it any other Way, I shall be glad. I leave it to you to do with it as you please, either to insert it in your *Paper* or Not: And am

Your Admirer and Servant,

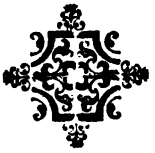
PHILELEUTHERUS.

FINIS.

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. IX.

OF PLAYS AND MASQUERADES.



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THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. I. NUMBER I.

OF

PLAYS

AND

MARQUIS DE R.

OF PLAYS AND MASQUERADES.

PLAYS and Publick Actings have been very antient, and may be innocent and useful under the Conduct of Wisdom and Virtue; and where there is a strict Regard to Truth and Decency, without any thing shocking or offensive to Modesty and Religion. There is no Necessity of Liberty and Loosenes, of false Embellishments of Oaths and Imprecations, or any thing immoral or profane. *That* arises from the vicious Disposition of the *Poet*, or the false Taste of the Audience, not from the Nature and Reason of the Thing.

They are capable of being made a proper Entertainment to virtuous Minds; they may be suited to convey right Notions, and to raise and improve our Ideas of Virtue, and

Loyalty, and Friendship. There are some Instances of such Performances in the Service of Religion, where the lively Images, and beautiful Descriptions, mightily engage and delight the Mind: As the incomparable Mr. *Boyle's Theodora and Dydimus*, a *Sacred Romance*. *Grotius's* Tragedy of the *Passion*; and *Buchanan's Jephtha*; and *Milton's Sampson Agonistes*. They may easily be so ordered as to convey *Moral* Instructions, and useful Rules of Life; by tracing the Steps of others Advancement and Honours, and of their Capacities and Service to the World; and by recommending brave and worthy Actions, and making them appear shining and lovely in the Light of a *successful Example*; Or by skilfully marking the Errors of their Conduct, and the Reasons and Occasions of their Fall and Misfortune. They are proper to represent the Vices and Follies of Men to a Disadvantage, and put them out of Countenance; To rally the Follies of the Great, and make fashionable Customs appear ridiculous, which are grown too obstinate, or are out of the Reach of other Methods of Cure; and to promote the Love of our Country, and a Zeal for the publick Welfare: To inspire Men with Sentiments of Liberty, and generous Regards; and raise a just Indignation of Arbitrary Government, and Slavish Submission. Mr. *Dennis's Revolution*, and Mr. *Addison's Cato* were seasonable Performances, and often acted to good Purpose. Or to recommend private Friendship; to raise Tenderness and Compassion to the Miseries and Misfortunes of other Men; and improve the Offices of mutual Love and common

mon Humanity: Mr. *Dennis's Iphigenia* is a noble Instance here: And they have a special Advantage to move the Passions, and fix the Ideas of Things in our Minds. When the Thoughts are just, the Expression beautiful, the Frame and Contrivance skilfull, the Action natural and regular, it has a strange Force: We often see how deep *Tragedy* affects the Mind, upon a low Subject, and to an ill Purpose. And who can doubt but it might be turn'd the right Way, and made serviceable to a more worthy and noble End?

This I say, in Justice to the Subject I am upon, and as what might well be conceiv'd of in the *Theory*; but what is hardly to be expected in *Practice*, from the *English Stage*. Neither our Poets, nor Actors, nor the Audiences that encourage them at present, shewing any Disposition to such virtuous Performances. And hence it comes to pass, that such a Play as *Cato* being produc'd but very rarely, it only serves to do Mischief; by drawing in the better and soberer Part of the Town, to those Diversions, which, in the common Course of them, are the most pernicious Things in the World. And for my own Part I can't help wishing, that either all Dramatick Entertainments were like *Cato*, and those of that sort; or else that there were none such: For then I hope in a little Time there would be none at all: Every thing of this kind, when ill applied, makes those publick Representations greater Instruments of Mischief.

The modern Stage is calculated and design'd to fill the Mind with false Notions of Honour, and wrong Sentiments of Things; to corrupt

corrupt the Imagination; to fire the Passions of unexperienc'd Youth, to wear out Impressions of Virtue, and to dispose, by Degrees, to every Evil.

The Mischief done to our Youth in general, by this kind of Diversion, is a Matter of easy and common Observation. No Age of Life is equally liable with this to the Insinuations of Pleasure, or so apt to be led off by it from all that is serious, and that requires Intensenes of Thought: And when Pleasure is dress'd out to Advantage, and recommended by dazling Images, beautiful Descriptions, charming Oratory, and graceful Action, how much more forcibly will it insinuate into the Heart, possess and captivate every Power of the Mind? And when, in this Age of Life, Men, from a natural Vivacity of Imagination, hate the Fatigue and Engagement of Business, how easily may they, by these Means, be utterly seduc'd from it? And among a trading People this is a Mischief to be dreaded and shun'd to the last Degree: Trade requiring Industry and Application, that the Mind be bent to it, and engagid in it.

The Men of Leisure are not indeed so much concern'd in this Reflection; but yet they may be ruin'd by taking such a wrong Turn of Mind in Youth. For a Mind unattentive to every thing but Pleasure, is a Mind enervated, dissolv'd, put entirely out of its own Possession and Power; and a Man of such a Temper is in a Manner lost to the rest of the Species; he is at the Beck of every wanton Imagination, at the Call of every tempting Object,

and

and easily prevail'd upon to melt himself down to the Dross of the basest Sensuality.

And the Representations of our Stage, at present, are fitted to the last Degree to feed this Inclination, to give a Relish to all the frothy and fulsome Pleasures of the vain and vicious part of Mankind. Vice is carried in Representation vastly beyond Nature, and set off with all the possible Advantages, both of Words and Gestures, and all the Enchantments of Musick. And when the Man has a natural Turn of Mind towards sensual Satisfactions, and has flung off all Regard for Business; what a Length may he be carried by these Theatrical Diversions? He is swimming with the Stream, and these Representations add, beyond what can be imagin'd, to the Violence of the Current. For where the bold Blasphemer is the Hero, the dissolute Rake is the Fine Gentleman, the Strumpet the Woman of Character and good Breeding; where the Man of Virtue and Probity (even every one who has not quite worn off all the Impressions of a good Education, and has some Religion and Conscience left, who can't swear cleverly, damn roundly, and sin impudently) is represented as the most despicable and worthless Wretch; here the very Bounds are broken down between Virtue and Vice. That which should engage Veneration, is expos'd to Scorn and Contempt: And that which should create Horror, is, by false Dress and Appearance, set off with Charms; made to insinuate into the Heart, and that, in a manner irresistibly, considering the Prepossession of the Mind in favour of Vanity and Vice. What Multi-

tudes

tudes have, in this way, been carried off from all Sense of Virtue, and drawn into the most dissolute Course of Life? And how many a noble Family has, by this means, run all out to Dregs?

But were our scenical Performances less vicious, they are naturally fitted to do Mischief to the *plain part* of Mankind, who are the most proper for carrying Trade and Business to any Height. For which Reason, if for no other, they must be a Nuisance to any Place depending upon Traffick. The Plan of most of these Representations is *Romantick*, and the Conduct of them full of Intrigue.

The first of these is naturally fitted to put the Imagination on the flutter, and give the Mind a distaste of every Thing common, and not very apt to surprize. And how odd a Turn is this for a Man who must keep plodding on, with a Mind intent upon his Business, and be contented to drive as it will go? Indeed the Projector in Trade is the *Hero* in a Romance. He must think out of the Way, and grow rich by a *Coup d' Eclat*. And thus many times, he gets broken Bones by encountring Wind-mills; or breaks his Neck by building Castles in the Air. This is the perfect Romantick Turn of Thought; a Taste of nothing but what is odd and astonishing. And how naturally does the long expected winding up of the Play, and the surprizing Issue of it at last, give the Mind such a Ply as this? It is visible that such as frequent the Theatre, especially in the gay Scene of Life, take this unhappy Turn. They put on the romantick Air, and talk in the romantick Tone; their

their common Conversation is throughly tinctur'd with this Jargon; they become bold, enterprizing, and yet effeminate.

For it must be remembred that all the Courage of a romantick Hero is inspir'd by a Mistress; it is the meer Effect of Love, and this, for the most part, of the baser kind. He can combat Giants, storm Castles, attack Armies, encounter Lions and Tygers, hew Dragons to pieces; he can climb Rocks, and fling himself down a Precipice, to recommend himself to a beautiful Damsel, and thus open a Way into her Heart; for the divine Thing has full Possession of his; and the dear Image brooding on his Mind creates that generous Ardour that sparkles in his Eyes, flourishes in his Arms, pushes him on to the most hazardous Attempts, and yet carries him safe through all his glorious Dangers. If he had not a Mistress, if his Heart were not full of Devotion to the Female, he would be as unenterprizing a Man as the rest of his Kind. But what an Elevation of Soul does this Affection give him? What Bravery does it infuse? it makes him bold beyond all Bounds. The more hazardous the Enterprize, the more reasonable is it in his Account to undertake it: He shall the more recommend himself to her on whom he dotes; and this is the very Height of his Ambition, the very last Thing he has in view.

What a Mixture is here! a Mind soften'd to the last Degree, by a criminal Passion, so that the Hero, many times, whines and faints and gasps for Life, through the Vehemence of his Love; and yet a sudden Gleam of Hope,

a pleasing Vision of his Idol, shall recall expiring Life, collect all the scatter'd Spirits, put Warmth into the whole Man, and give him a Vigour more than mortal. His Heart shall not shake at the most frightful Dangers, nor his Strength fail in the most fierce and bloody Encounter. He shall fight any Thing, and never flinch from the Battle, nor yet be worsted in it. This is the Inspiration of Plays, and all this Courage and Bravery is the Effect of Devotion to a beautiful Lady. And the Language and Air, that is at once effeminate and enterprizing, soft even to languishing, and yet so bold as to be full of Defiance, is the true romantick Strain. Such a Turn as this do the Representations of the Stage insensibly give the Mind and Manners of those, our Youth specially, that attend them. A Turn that is indeed visionary and enthusiastick, and of all Things most unfit for Trade and Traffick.

But the Conduct of these Representations is very intriguing; The Plot of the Play is the Master-wheel in this elegant Machine. The great Art of the Poet lies in carrying on one Design thorough many a perplexing Circumstance, to a certain and commonly a surprizing End, though not always over honourable or very innocent. Now this generally strikes the youthful Mind, full of Vigour and Quickness, and fond of Novelty and Surprize. At first, perhaps, 'tis only struck with the astonishing Events: But by Degrees he falls into the Conduct of the Play, and observes by what Steps it proceeds to this Conclusion, and how

through

through many Intricacies and Turnings the Thing in View is accomplish'd and brought about at last. And this, by insensible Degrees leads him into the Contrivance, gives him a deal of Satisfaction in the Success of the Intrigue; though the glorious Upshot be many times, no more, than cheating a Parent to steal a Fortune, deceiving a Friend to debauch his Wife, making a Man kill himself to be reveng'd on a prosperous Rival; or a Woman embrue her Hands in her own Blood, because she had stain'd her Honour and could not continue to be lewd, and yet keep up her Reputation. And this sort of intriguing opens all those secret Scenes of Wickedness, that should, if possible, be ever kept conceal'd, and remain as dark and unknown, as they are black and detestable.

But the very intriguing Humour itself corrupts, and gives a Turn no way proper and suitable to Trade. It carries the Man of Trade off from his proper Business; for he has other Schemes to lay, and other Intrigues to carry on. But if he should think fit to translate the Theatre into his Shop, or the Exchange, and pursue his Designs according to the Schemes he has seen laid and prosecuted in Plays, he will be in great danger of losing himself. Should the Man of Business always affect to act in the Dark, carry on his Designs under ground, and perplex all he has to deal with, that at last he may shine in upon them at once, and surprize all about him, by opening his Design, he would soon ruin all his Credit and Interest. Such a dark clan-

destine Method may indeed serve to conceal and disguise a Knave; but however Knavery may succeed in some few Instances, with particular Persons, it must, in general Practice, ruin all Traffick. It is frank and open and honest Dealing, that must raise Credit and engage Customers. The intriguing Turn must be exceedingly pernicious to the trading part of Mankind. And Methods of Diversion, that at once teach the Art and insinuate the Love of Intriguing, ought therefore to be esteem'd particularly unsuitable and dangerous to a trading People.

But though the Danger and Detriment to this particular Set of Men, from Entertainments of this kind, be very obvious and remarkable; yet these are far from being the *only* Persons that are like to suffer by them. This Mischief must be more extensive: 'Tis general, as well as great, if we consider the direct Tendency the Stage has to destroy all manner of *Truth.* And by this means Plays become the Root and Spring of all manner of Disorders. They are apt to give others, as well as the Persons above mention'd, false Notions of Things, and to lead all that frequent them into false Schemes of Life; and incline Persons to act upon a view of Things in their own Fancies, which carries them quite across to the Course of Things in the World. And then Men quarrel with every Disappointment, and will rather disturb the Order of Nature, and vilify the Proceedings of Providence, and confound all about them, than give up their wild Projects and Expectations. Their Heads

are

are ever working about one uselefs, if not base, Intrigue or other, instead of applying themselves to the Business of Life. They are building *Castles* in the *Air*, when they should be laying the true Foundation for Glory and Happiness; I mean, attending to Actions that are wise and beneficial, and worthy of Praise.

'Tis the Ruin of *Servants* to have their Heads fill'd with a company of airy and towering Expectations; makes them think themselves presently above their Stations, or leads them to play innumerable false and unfaithful Tricks in their Service: And it gives them such a roving Temper, that they will never continue long in any Station, nor make it their Study to suit themselves to it.

'Tis the great Cause of Disobedience and Undutifulness in *Children*, to frequent Plays, and to be conversant with *Romances*: They thereby grow into a Contempt of all the Orders of a Family, and the Commands of Parents; and impatient under all manner of Restraint, though never so prudent or necessary. They are ever contriving either to impose upon the good Nature, or to cast Contempt and Slights upon the Anger and Resentment, of those to whom they should be subject. And 'tis ten to one, but by some of those Managements which they have learnt from the Stage, they shall bring about Matches, or Revolutions in Families, which shall ruin the Glory, Credit, and Comfort of them.

And then after Marriage; 'tis this that leads many a young *Couple* into those wild and

and expensive Managements, that render themselves the Scorn, and their Estates the Prey, of those about them.

'Tis the false Representations of Things in Plays, that tempt married Persons to become unfaithful to one another; and to court the Affections, and give themselves up to the Embraces, of Strangers. Here we must charge in a great Measure, the loss of that Family Conduct and Government, which gave such a Greatness to some of our Ancestors. The Institution of *Marriage* itself is the common Jest of the Play House; and every Thing that is wise and regular in that State is expos'd to Contempt.

The Stage teaches Men to throw the utmost Contempt upon *Magistrates*, particularly the *City Magistrates*. The Names of God, and Christ, are most trivially us'd, and sometimes most shockingly blasphem'd. The *Priesthood* is scandalously abused, and all manner of Superiors are insulted. The worst Vices are encouraged, and the brightest Virtues are sullied and disgrac'd. The *Church*, I say the *Church*, is most scurrilously treated. And infamous Endeavours are made to create in the Minds of Men an utter Abhorrence of the Society for Reformation of Manners, to whom this City and Nation stand so much indebted. The Scriptures are burlesqu'd; and all Religion is undermin'd: In short, all the Order of Things is inverted; and if the Stage prevails as it has been manag'd here in *England*, even by the Direction of the most celebrated

celebrated Poets, it must throw all into Disorder and Confusion. *

And we have numberless Instances of all these Enormities, even since Mr. *Collier* complain'd so justly and loudly of the *Incorrigibleness of the Stage*: So that there is great Reason to repeat what he has said upon that Head, in his *Short Dissuasive* from the *Play-House*, in 1703. " The *Poets*, indeed (as that Author " observes) finding their Cause expos'd by " those that writ against them, as too gross " and defenceless, and that the Force of " Truth would prevail, they laid down and " left the Field. The *Players* also met with " farther Instruction: The *Laws* were let loose " upon them: They were disciplin'd at " *Westminster-Hall*. However, all this Con- " viction and Discouragement won't do. " They are proof against Reason and Punish- " ment, against Fines and Arguments, and " come over again with their old Smut and " Profaneness. One would think, by their " desperate Pushing, they were resolv'd to " exterminate Religion, and subdue the Con- " science of the Kingdom.

What that Author adds in the next *Page*, we have *fresh* Occasion to observe and insert; *Musicians* and *Players*, of late, having so many of them found their Way hither from foreign Parts. " As if the old Batteries were too " weak,

* See Instances of these Things in *The Evil and Danger of Plays*, by Mr. *Bedford*, Chaplain to his Grace *Wriothesly* Duke of *Bedford*.

" weak, they have strengthen'd the Attack, " and levy'd Recruits of Musick and Dan- " cing beyond Sea. There was great Occa- " sion, no question, to draw down more " Forces upon Flesh and Blood; and to " spring a new Mine, to help storm the " Senses, and blow up the Passions to Com- " bustion! And when People are thus " thrown off their Guard, and disarm'd of " their Discretion, the *Play-House* is ad- " mirably furnish'd with *Provision* to seize " the Advantage and improve the Opportu- " nity.

After this Mr. *Collier* observes, " That " the Republick of *Rome*, before *Julius Cæsar*, " stop'd the building of a *Theatre*; being " fully convinc'd, that this Diversion would " bring in Foreign Vice, that the old *Roman* " Virtue would be lost, and the Spirits of " the People emasculated. This wise Na- " tion made the Function of Players scan- " dalous, seiz'd their Freedoms, and threw " them out of Privilege and Reputa- " tion. "*. And then coming to our own Constitution, he shews, † " That the Players " are forbidden to act and scatter their In- " fection through the Kingdom, under very " severe and infamous Penalties. In the " Reign of the famous Queen *Elizabeth*, " there was an Order of Queen and Coun- " cil, to drive the *Players* out of the City " and

* Defence of the View of the Stage, &c. p. 85.
† Dissuas. p. 12. and View of the Stage, chap. 6.

" and Liberties of *London*, * and to pull " down the *Theatres*, which was executed ac- " cordingly." To this I may subjoin, that all *Licences* to Actors or common Players are taken away by a *Statute* † in King *James* I. Reign. And since Mr. *Collier* writ against the Stage, we have a Statute made in the *Twelfth* Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen *Anne*, intitled, *An Act for reducing the Laws relating to Rogues, Vagabonds, sturdy Beggars and Vagrants, into one Act of Parliament*; wherein it is enacted, among other Things, " That all Fencers, Bear-wards, " common Players of Interludes, *&c.* shall " be taken and judg'd Rogues and Vaga- " bonds; and the Constables, or other Inhabi- " tants, may bring such before a Justice of " Peace to be examin'd.

" And every Person declar'd to be a " Rogue, *&c.* by this Statute, shall, by the " Justice of Peace, be sent to the last Place of " Settlement, Place of Birth, *&c.* and may " be publickly whip'd and sent to the House " of Correction.

" Constables, *&c.* who neglect their Duty, " in this respect, to forfeit *Twenty Shillings*. " And all Persons molesting or hindring the " Execution of this Act, to forfeit *Twenty* " *Shillings*.

Thus we see the Sense of our own Legislature in this Matter. And Mr. *Collier* has assur'd us that there are several *European*

* 39 *Eliz. cap.* 4. † *Jac.* 1. *cap.* 7.

Countries that would never endure Stage-Plays in any Form, or under any Regulations. Is it not a Pity that any should countenance *that* in one Capacity, which they so freely censure and condemn in another?

And yet notwithstanding this, which seems to have the Nature of their publick Protest against them, great Men have been said to descend so low, as to be present even at some of the meanest of these Entertainments. Persons of the first Rank in Life have shewn a Fondness for this Method of amusing themselves. Tho' perhaps, there are none whose Circumstances and Stations they less suit, or whose real Interest they less serve. A Court can hardly ever countenance and attend Diversions of this kind, without suffering by them.

All expensive Pursuits after Pleasure, all Instances of Excess and Luxury, naturally lead into dishonourable Methods of Management. There must be some way of gathering again, what on these Occasions is lavishly scatter'd. This paves the Way to all Extortion and Rapine, to the greatest Corruption and Abuse of Interest and Power. This lays a Court open, either to the Insults or the Practisings of neighbouring States: Of which we have had a melancholy and undeniable Instance in the Reign of our late good natur'd King *Charles* II. And both from the Nature of the Thing, and too frequent Experience, 'tis plain, that the giving into this merry gay way of Living, must necessarily give a wrong Turn to our gay Youth of Quality. It will make them incapable of that close

close Thought and thorough Application, without which 'tis impossible to shine in any Post of Eminence. It takes off their Minds from every Thing that would enable them to make a decent Figure in Life. They meet with nothing there suited to give them one serious Thought of laying Schemes, drawing Memorials, or writing Letters of State.

And besides this, the giving themselves up to such Entertainments and Diversions as Plays and Masquerades, will very much debase them in the Opinion of Mankind. It will not only spoil their Taste and incapacitate them for Business, but it will give other Men very mean Notions of them. The Accompanying with Men every way so much their Inferiors, can never be a way to secure the Respect that is due to an elevated Station, or a publick Character. Great Men, even when they unbend or relax, ought to think it worthy of some Measure of their Care, that they do it with Decency. Their Minds are no more capable of uninterrupted Application than ours are. Some Diversions therefore are necessary for them. Only let them, for Kind, be well chosen. And let such and such only be admitted to partake in them, who are some way fit to be their Companions and Associates. Will it not abate of the Awe and the Reverence that is due to their Characters, if the Entertainments are very mean, ludicrous and unmanly? or if in the attending upon them they set themselves upon a Level with the very Dregs of the People.

With such Company, it is no very noble and grand Entertainment to be a Spectator of others Representations; but 'tis stooping still lower to become an Actor. Certainly 'tis a mean Employment to divert and entertain an Audience, to appear in different Dresses and Postures, to put on a various Humour and Passion, only to excite the Mirth and Laughter of others, where there is no Pretence of Instruction or Advantage. 'Tis much beneath the Dignity of the Great, and lessens the Regard to a Character of Wisdom, and Post of Honour; and there are nobler Entertainments, and more manly Diversions, than to act the *Jester*, and to go to *Childrens* Play.

I am very sensible that 'tis an Apprehension of its Popularity that has been the principal Inducement to Men of an advanc'd Station, to show any Countenance to those less reputable Diversions. They have thought it good Policy, and a likely means to gain the Affection and Applause of the Multitude. But then it ought to be consider'd, that it must be the Weak, the Vitious, the more deprav'd of the Populace, that are this way to be gain'd; Persons, upon whose Integrity, or Ability to serve a Government, it can never be wise or safe to rely; while by such a Method of courting them, the more Grave and Thinking among their Subjects are shock'd, if not lost, and wholly estranged from them.

I would fain hope therefore that *The Free Thinker Extraordinary* had good Reason to doubt of the Truth of those Reports that have

have been given out, that Plays and Masquerades are in a very unusual, almost unprecedented manner countenanc'd and encourag'd by the present Administration: Especially, as to those latter. For whatever favourable Construction may be put upon the Performances of the Stage, yet the late Practice of Masquerading ought, in an especial manner, to be protested against by every honest Man.

"I will not believe, says that Author, "that this Masquerading is such a favourite "Diversion to some of the greatest among us, "as is insinuated: Or, that Magistrates are "by this Consideration deter'd from doing "their Duty: No, I know these are false "Reports, whose Authors, if they could be "found out, deserve to be severely punish'd; "the Indecency, the Frequency, the Danger, "the Place, and several other Circumstances, "persuade me that 'tis rather the Suggestion "of those, who, under a puissant Name, "would shelter their own Lewdness. Our "Archbishops and Bishops, our Secre-"taries of State, &c. would more carefully "watch over the publick Morals, and the "valuable Lives that might be interested by "being present at such a scandalous Meet-"ing. *

Nay, methinks I could almost believe, perhaps because I wish, that they would readily give in to a Test were it once propos'd to them, whereby every Man should be render'd incapable

* *Freethink. Extraord.* N°. 4.

pable of any Post of Honour, Trust or Profit who had been ever seen at a Masquerade.

And I the rather think this, because I know the very Origin of those riotous Assemblies among us, must exceedingly prejudice, the Persons I am now speaking of, against them. "For (as an ingenious Writer has observ'd) "they are an Innovation introduc'd into this "City by a *French* Duke, whose chief Busi-"ness it was to seduce us by specious Ap-"pearances; and to undermine the Virtue of "the Nation by such Methods of Luxury, "and such Maxims of Policy, as we are sure "they neither did, nor can approve." *

The same Author has two or three farther Reflections on these Entertainments, which I can't forbear transcribing from the same Paper. "Masquerades, says he, may pass "for a very Arch-Contrivance in Countries "where Jealousy passes for Wisdom; where "every Master of a Family locks up his Wo-"men; and where the two Sexes never have "an Opportunity to converse promiscuously, "but in Disguise. In *Great Britain* the Ladies "are as free as the Gentlemen, and we have "no Diversions, nor publick Amusements, in "which the one may not appear without Of-"fence, as frankly as the other, in their pro-"per Persons. They must have very mean "Notions of Politeness, who can imagine this "Outlandish Extravagance any Improvement "to our National Diversions. The wearing "of

* *The Freethinker*, N. 68.

" of an odd Mask, or a whimsical Habit is a
" very poor Mechanical Way of being witty.
" And I am pleas'd to find our Masqueraders
" compleatly aukward in their borrow'd Cha-
" racters. Without answering Questions they
" expect their Dress should speak for them:
" They stalk about like a Crowd of Mutes;
" and the great Room in the *Hay Market* up-
" on these Occasions resembles (said a plea-
" sant *North Britain*) the Wardrobe of some
" antient Gothick King, animated by Gob-
" lins. ".

" If we compute the Expence of the Ha-
" bits, and the Expensiveness of the Sub-
" scriptions, to furnish out those Scenes of
" Folly, the Contributors will justly fall un-
" der the Censure of a severe Proverb. Per-
" sons of Quality and Fashion should never
" debase their Liberality, by lavishing away
" Money, to countenance in a publick Man-
" ner, any Contrivance which can never tend
" to improve any kind of Knowledge or Ele-
" gance in Life. "

And a little lower he adds, for the Instruction or Reproof of our fine Ladies: " The
" Women of Quality in old *Rome* would not
" have disburs'd the smallest Piece of Coin to
" support a Masquerade; and yet would, in
" a Body, make the largest Subscriptions to
" serve the State, even to the Generosity of
" parting with their very Bracelets and Jewels
" freely and unask'd, for the Good of their
" Country. ".

Was it an unnatural Reflection which the *Honest Gentleman* represents himself as making on

on his melancholy Dream upon this Subject? "The Government, methought, says he, when "I waked, must be afraid not only upon a "publick Account, for fear these mighty "Meetings should prove dangerous to the "Commonwealth; but also each for himself, "lest he should find his Wife or his Daughters "concern'd in this Extravagance."

And when Persons, that can so throughly remedy these Evils, are so particularly and nearly concern'd, will there be no Regard shown to the earnest Cries of this great City; That her Youth may not be infected, and their Inclinations drawn off from their Professions and Employments? Will the Sighs and Tears of many once flourishing, but now disconsolate Families, ruin'd by the dissolute Lives of their chief Branches, who lost their Virtue by frequenting these fatal Entertainments, move no Compassion? Will the earnest Solicitation of the wise and sober Part of the Kingdom, to spare the small Remains of Principle, Honour and Conscience, to stop the spreading Plague, prove still ineffectual? If all this will not do, but Men will go on with inexorable Cruelty, to poison the Minds and ruin the Morals of the Nation; I must be allow'd to say, there is nothing to be expected from the Attempts for Reformation, or the Preaching of the Clergy.

Preachers may urge it as the necessary Duty of the People, to avoid these Occasions

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* *Honest Gentleman.* N. 4.

sions of Evil, and yet the People will almost run out of the Church to be at them. They may shew them how they rush into Snares, and they *will rush* into them. They may tell them from the Pulpit how they court Temptation, and invite all the Powers of Vice to try their Utmost upon them; they will court Temptation, they will invite and welcome the Tempter still, tho' all Hell follow at his Heels. The Churches may e'en be shut up if the Masquerades be kept open. 'Tis Miracle must be added to preaching, to save our Religion, as well as at first to establish it. These Practices are in Defiance to the very Design of Preaching the Gospel, which is, *To turn Men from those Vanities to the Living God.* It is all ruin'd and destroy'd therefore by these Diversions.

I may venture to say, that the Apostles themselves would have had no Success, nor Christianity gain'd Ground, if its Professors had been allow'd these Pomps and Vanities, which at their Baptism they renounc'd. To join in thus with the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, is a renouncing their Baptism, as truly as Baptism is a renouncing them. 'Tis a Proof that the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, are too hard for Baptism and Preaching.

'Tis a small Matter, in Comparison, the exposing the Character and Habit of a Clergyman on these Occasions, as is often done. The Mischief lies in the Consequence of seeing such a one play the Fool, or lead off a Masque: The Farce being acted in a religious

Figure, the Abuse strikes stronger upon the Sense, the Contempt is better spread, and the little Idea is apt to return upon the same Appearance: And what good can the best Sermon in the World do upon a Mind so prepossess'd? The Prepossession contracted in Favour of the pleasurable Sin, renders a Man impregnable to the ordinary Methods of Salvation. If they warn the People of Danger, and press Men earnestly to fly from it; if they point out the fatal Rocks whereon so many Shipwrecks of Modesty and Innocence have been made, why, 'tis their Trade.

I cannot but here call upon our Divines; Oh cease your other Quarrels, and unite your Thoughts against these growing Mischiefs. Shew a little Zeal sometimes for the Essence of your Religion; spend not all your Flame about Rites and Ceremonies; For if Masquerades and Plays go on as they have done, they will, in time, leave you nothing but those Ceremonies of all Religion; and that's pretty much the same with none at all. You have no Success to hope for, while these Abominations are indulg'd, while these unhallow'd *Groves* and *High Places* of Immorality are frequented. You will either not be heard at all, or heard to no Purpose.

The next bad Thing to acting these, is to encourage them by being present at them; and the next to that, is to be inactive and silent, while this *evil Communication corrupts all good Manners.*

A private Writer, abovemention'd, has very justly observ'd, " That it behoves the " Civil

"Civil Magistrate not to authorize, nor even "to suffer any Shews or Spectacles of a pub-"lick Nature, which do not, in some degree, "improve (at least, not corrupt) the Minds "of the People while they are diverted." * But I have not yet heard, that there has "any "Magistrate shewn himself so honest and "couragious as to come with his *Posse* of "Constables and Watch; and, after he has "read the Proclamation, break up such a "profligate Assembly. Several to be met "with there, are Vagabonds by the Statute. "At such a Time of Night, in such a Place, "at such a Time of Year, employ'd in such "Work, as he will see all that he finds, they "are liable to be seiz'd and sent to Jayl: And "his Oath and Duty, both to God and his "Country, oblige him to be active in sup-"pressing so horrid and unseasonable a piece "of Riot, which no Country upon Earth has "ever shewn the like of in all its Circum-"stances. †

But if the Abuse should continue, I can't but hope there will be found some who will exert themselves in correcting and suppressing it. Especially since I find it observ'd in a late Charge to the Grand Jury of *Middlesex*, that *one Play-House ruins more Souls than fifty Churches are able to save*; * and that the Masquerades lately set up, even in *Lent*, are a Scene of Lewdness, a Congress to an unclean End;

* The *Freethinker*, N. 68. † The *Freethinker Extraord.* N. 4.

* First Charge of *Whit. Bulstrode*, Esq; *p.* 35, 37.

End; the Debauchery is here begun, and finish'd in the Neighbourhood.

The Mind is over-run with the Amusement of these Diversions, and is commonly good for nothing some time after. If they become frequent, the Minds of Men will be good for nothing to Eternity.

'Tis entring into a League with the World, the Flesh and the Devil, Nature, Passion and Art, against Reason and Religion. They cherish those very Passions which 'tis the very Business of Religion to discountenance and conquer; they strike at the Root of all Principle, and draw off the Inclination from Virtue, and spoil all good Education. 'Tis the most effectual Method to baffle the Force of Discipline, to emasculate the Spirits, and debauch the Manners. And yet these *Syrens* go on to devour the Unwary: And Men continue to say, the best Blood of the Nation is tainted with the Infection.

F I N I S.

THE OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. X.

OF GENIUS.

The Cartesian *Categories are contain'd in these two Verses*,

Mens, mensura, quies, motus, positura, Figura,
Sunt, cum materia, cunctarum Exordia rerum.

The Spiritual Nature, Mens, *is at the head of All, It ought to be look'd on here, as a Transcendent Nature*, quæ vagatur per omnes Categorias.

Bayle's Diction. *on the Heathen Doctrine of many* Genij. See *CAINITES.*

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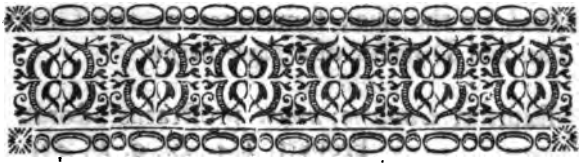

OF GENIUS.

IT is a Matter of common Observation, that there is a vast Variety in the Bent of Mens Minds. Some have a Taste of one Way of Living, some of another; some have a Turn for one kind of Employment, others for what is quite different. Whether this be from the Constitution of the Mind itself, as some Soils are more apt to produce some Plants and Herbs than others; or from the Laws of Union between the Body and Mind, as some Climates are more kindly to nurse particular Vegetables than others; or from the immediate Impulse of that Power which governs the World, is not so easy to determine.

We ascribe this to a difference of *Genius* amongst Men. *Genius* was a Deity worshipped by the Antient Idolaters: Sometimes as the God of *Nature*; sometimes as the God of a particular *City* or *Country*, or *Fountain*, or

Wood, or the like; sometimes as the Guardian and Director of a *single Person*.

Exuitur, *Geniumq; meum* prostratus adorat.
Propert. *l.* 4. *El.* 9. *V.* 43.

THE Heathens had a Notion, that every Man upon his Birth was given up to the † Conduct of some invisible Being, who was to form his Mind, and govern and direct his Life. This *Being* the *Greeks* called * Δαίμων or Δαιμόνιον; the *Latins*, *Genius*. Some of them suppos'd a ** Pair of *Genij* were to attend every *Man* from his Birth; one Good, always putting him on the Practice of Virtue; the other Bad, prompting him to a vicious Behaviour; and according as their several Suggestions were most attended to, the Man became either Virtuous or Vicious in his Inclinations: And from this Influence, which the

† *Ferunt Theologi, in lucem editis Hominibus cunctis, Salva firmitate fatali, hujusmodi quædam, velut actus rectura, numina Sociari: Admodum tamen paucissimis visa, quos multiplices auxere virtutes. Idque & Oracula & Autores docuerunt præclari.* Ammian Marcel. Lib. 21.

* Ἅπαντι Δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαρίσταται
Εὐθὺς γενομένῳ μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου Menan.

† *Scil* Genius Natale comes, qui temperat Astrum,
Natura Deus Humana. Horat.

** *Volunt unicuique Genium appositum Dæmonem bonum & malum, hoc est rationem quæ ad meliora semper hortatur, & libidinem quæ ad pejora, hic est Larva & Genius malus, ille bonus Genius & Lar.* Serv. in Virgil, Lib. 6. v. 743.

the *Genius* was suppos'd to have towards forming the Mind, the Word was by degrees made to stand for the Inclination itself. Hence ‡*‡ *indulgere Genio* with the *Latins* signifies, to give Scope to Inclination, and more commonly to what is none of the best. On the other Hand, § *Defraudare Genium*, signifies to deny Nature what it craves.

BUT a *Genius* in common Acceptation amongst *us*, doth not barely answer to this Sense. The *Pondus Animæ* is to be taken into its Meaning, as well as the bare Inclination; as Gravitation in a Body (to which this bears great Resemblance) doth not barely imply a determination of its Motion towards a certain Center, but the *Vis* or Force with which it is carried forward; and so the *English* Word *Genius*, answers to the same *Latin* Word, and *Ingenium* together. † *Ingenium* is the *Vis ingenita*, the natural Force or Power with which every Being is indued; and this, together with the particular Inclination of the Mind, towards any Business, or Study, or Way of Life, is what we mean by a *Genius*. Both are necessary to make a Man shine in any Station or Employment. Nothing considerable can be done against the Grain, or as the *Latins* express it, *invita Minerva*, in spite of Power and Inclination.

" Forc'd

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‡*‡ *Indulge Genio: carpamus dulcia.* Pers. Sat. 5.
§ *Suum defraudans Genium.* Terent. Phorm. Act. 1.
† *Ingenium quasi intus genitum.*

" Forc'd Studies, says † *Seneca*, will never " answer: The Labour is in vain where Na- " ture recoils. Indeed, where the Inclination towards any Thing is strong, Diligence and Application will in a great Measure supply the Defect of natural Abilities: But then only is it a finish'd *Genius*, when with a strong Inclination there is a due Proportion of Force and Vigour in the Mind to pursue it.

THERE is a vast Variety of these Inclinations among Mankind. Some there are who have no bent to Business at all; but, if they could indulge Inclination, would doze out Life in perpetual Sloth and Inactivity: Others can't be altogether Idle, but incline only to trifling and useless Employments, or such as are altogether out of Character. Both these sorts of Men are properly good for nothing: They just live, and help to * consume the Products of the Earth, but answer no valuable End of Living, out of Inclination I mean; Providence and good Government have sometimes made them serviceable against it.

THE better, and in Truth only valuable, Part of Mankind, have a Turn for one sort of Business or other, but with great variety of Taste. Some are addicted to deep Thought and Contemplation: Some to the abstracted Speculations of Metaphysicks; some to the evident

† *Male respondent ingenia coactæ; reluctante naturâ irritus Labor est.*

* *Fruges consumere nati.* Horat.

evident Demonstrations of the Mathematicks; some to the History of Nature, built upon true Narration, or accurate Observations and Experiments: Some to the Invention of *Hypotheses*, to solve the various *Phænomena*. Some affect the study of Languages, Criticism, Oratory, Poetry, and such like Studies. Some have a Taste for Musick, some for History and those Sciences which must help to Accuracy in it: Some have Heads turned for Politicks, and others for War. Some few there are of such quick and strong Faculties, as to grasp at every thing, and who have made a very eminent Figure in several Professions at once. We have known in our Days the same Men learned in the Laws, acute Philosophers, and deep Divines: We have known others at once eloquent Orators, brave Soldiers, and finished Statesmen. But these Instances are rare.

THE more general Inclination among Men is to some Mechanical Business. Of this there is most general Use for the Purposes of Human Life, and it needs most Hands to carry it on. The bulk of Mankind seem turned for some or other of these Employments, and make them their Choice; and were not such a multiplicity of Hands engaged in them, great part of the Conveniencies of Human Life would be wanting. But even the Multitude of these Employments leaves room for great variety of Inclinations, and for different *Genij*, to display and exert themselves.

This is an admirable and wise Provision to answer every End and Occasion of Mankind,

kind, for a ſure and harmonious Concurrence of Mens Actions to all the neceſſary and uſeful Affairs of the World. When in very different Ways, but with equal Pleaſure and Application, they contribute to the Order and Service of the whole. Mr. *Dryden* has given an Hint, how we may form a beautiful and pleaſing Idea of this from the Powers of Muſick, that ariſe from the Variety and artful Compoſition of Sounds.

From Harmony, from Heavenly Harmony,
This Univerſal Frame began.
From Harmony to Harmony,
Thro' all the Compaſs of the Notes it ran,
The Diapaſon closing full in Man.

THERE ſeems to be a wonderful Likeneſs in the natural Make of Mens Minds to the various Tones and Meaſures of Sounds; and in their Inclinations and moſt pleaſing Taſtes to the ſeveral Styles and Manners of Muſick. Something there is in the Mind, of alike Compoſition, that is eaſily touch'd by the kindred Harmony of Muſick,

For Man may juſtly tuneful Strains admire,
His Soul is Muſick, and his Breaſt a Lyre.

n.b. WE have all the Materials of Muſick in the Tones and Meaſure: For the infinite Variety Compoſition admits of, can be nothing elſe, but higher or lower Tones, ſtronger or ſofter Sounds, with a ſlower or ſwifter Motion: The Artiſt, by an harmonious Mixture of

of these, makes the Musick either strong and martial, brisk and airy, grave and solemn, or soft and moving.

THERE seems to be in Man a Composition of natural Powers and Capacities, not unlike to these. From hence I would take the first Original of their distinguishing *Genius*. The Words by which they are usually explain'd, have a manifest Allusion hereto. Thus we say of some Men, they have a brisk and airy *Genius*; of others, they have a strong and active *Genius*, a quick and lively Spirit, a grave and solemn Temper, and the like. The different readiness of Apprehension, strength of Judgment, vivacity of Fancy and Imagination, with a more or less active Disposition, and the several Mixtures of which these Powers are capable, are sufficient to explain this. They may shew us how some have a particular *Genius* for Wit and Humour, others for Thought and Speculation. Whence it is, some love a constant and persevering Application to whatever they undertake; and others are continually jumping from one Thing to another, without finishing any thing at all.

BUT we do not only consider in Musick these Materials, as I may call them, of which it is composed; but also the Style and Manner. This diversifies the *Genius* of the Composer, and produces the most sensible and touching Difference. There is in all Musick the natural difference of Tone and Measure: They are to be found in the most vulgar Compositions of a Jig or an Hornpipe; But it n.b.

n.b. is a full Knowledge of the Force and Power of Sounds, and a judicious Application of them to the ſeveral Intentions of Muſick, that forms the Style of a *Purcel* or *Corelli:* This is owing to ſucceſſive Improvements. The Ear is formed to an elegant Judgment by Degrees. What is harſh and harmonious is diſcovered and corrected. By many Advantages, ſome at laſt come to find out what, in the whole Compaſs of Sounds, is moſt ſoft and touching, moſt brisk and enlivening, moſt lofty and elevating; So that whatever the Artiſt intends, whether to ſet an Air, or compoſe a *Te Deum*, he does either, with an equal *Genius*, that is, with equal Propriety and Elegance: Thus long ago,

Timotheus *to his breathing Flute, and ſounding Lyre,*
Could ſwell the Soul to Rage, or kindle ſoft Deſire.

And,

Thus David's *Lyre did* Saul's *wild Rage controul,*
And tune the harſh Diſorders of his Soul:

This may direct us to another Cauſe, from whence a *Genius* ariſes: A *Genius* that is formed and acquired. For the Turn that Education, Company, Buſineſs, the Taſte of the Age, and above all, Principles of vitious or virtuous Manners, give to a Man's natural Capacities, is what chiefly forms his *Genius*. Thus we ſay of ſome, they have a rude unpoliſh'd *Genius*; of others, they have a fine, polite *Genius*. The manner of applying the natural Powers of the Mind, is what alone may produce the moſt different and oppoſite

posite *Genij*. Libertine Principles, and Vitious Morals, may form the Genius of a *Rake*, from the same natural Capacity, out of which Virtuous Principles might have form'd an *Hero*. n.b.

THERE is certainly in our natural Capacities themselves, a Fitness for some Things, and Unfitness for others. Thus whatever great Capacities a Man may have, if he is naturally timorous, or a Coward, he never can have a Warlike *Genius*. If a Man has not a good Judgment, how great soever his Wit may be, or polite his Manners, he never will have the *Genius* of a Statesman. Just as strong Sounds and brisk Measures can never touch the softer Passions. Yet as the Art and Skill of the Composer, is required to the *Genius* of Musick, so is a Knowledge of the Force and Power of the natural Capacity, and a judicious Application of it to the best and most proper Purposes, what forms a *Genius* for any Thing. This is the effect of Care, Experience and a right Improvement of every Advantage that offers. On this Observation *Horace* founded his Rules for a Poetical *Genius*.

Versate diu quid fere recusent
Quid valeant humeri.

And,

Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium.

To speak my Thoughts, I hardly know,
What witless Art, or artless Wit can do.

Creech.

The same Observation in another kind is elegantly described by Mr. *Waller*.

Great Julius *on the Mountains bred,*
A Flock perhaps, or Herd had led:
He that the World subdued, had been
But the best Wrestler on the Green:
'Tis Art and Knowledge that draw forth
The hidden Seeds of Native Worth:
They blow those Sparks, and make 'em rise
Into such Flames as touch the Skies.

n.b. The High and Martial Spirit of *Cæsar* would have inclined and fitted him, to gain the Prize of Wrestling above any Country Sport; But it was the Circumstance of his own Birth and Fortune, the State and Condition of the Commonwealth, and the Concurrence of many other Advantages, which he improv'd with great Care and Application, that made him a finish'd *Genius*, both in Arms and Policy.

THERE is yet another Thing of Consequence to a true *Genius* in Musick. A Knowledge of the Compass and peculiar Advantages of each several Instrument. For the same Composition will very differently touch both the Ear and the Mind, as perform'd by a Flute, or Trumpet, an Organ, or a Violin. A difference which, all discern by the Ear, but which requires a judicious Observation in the Composer. Mr. *Hughes* has thus express'd their different Powers.

Let

Let the Trumpet's shrill Voice,
And the Drum's thundring Noise
Rouse every dull Mortal from Sorrow profound.

And,

Proceed, sweet Charmer of the Ear,
Proceed, and through the mellow Flute,
The moving Lyre,
And solitary Lute,
Melting Airs, soft Joys inspire,
Airs for drooping Hope to hear.

And again,

Now, let the sprightly Violin
A louder Strain begin:
And now,
Let the deep mouth'd Organ blow,
Swell it high and sink it low:
Hark! how the Treble and the Base
In wanton Fugues each other chase,
And swift Divisions run their Airy Race:
Thro' all the travers'd Scale they fly,
In winding Labyrinths of Harmony,
By Turns They rise and fall, by Turns we live
(and die.

ONE might not unfitly compare to this difference of Instruments, the different Make and Constitution of Mens Bodies, with the Influence they have, and the Impression they make on their Minds, Passions and Actions. From hence alone they may know much, how to direct their own proper Capacities, and how they are to suit each Person they are to use, to the most proper Employment. As Mr. *Pope* speaks of the Instruments of Musick.

In

In a sadly pleasing Strain,
Let the warbling Lute complain.
Let the loud Trumpet sound,
Till the Roofs all around
The shrill Echo's rebound.
While in more lengthen'd Notes and slow,
The deep, majestick, solemn Organs blow.

HARMONY, in its most restrain'd Sense, is the apt and agreeable mixture of various Sounds. Such a Composition of them as is fitted to please the Ear. But every thing in a more extended Sense is harmonious, where there is a variety of Things dispos'd and mix'd in such apt and agreeable Manner. Things may indeed be thrown together in a Crowd, without Order or Art. And then every thing appears in Confusion, disagreeable and apt to disgust. But absolute Uniformity will give little more Pleasure than meer Confusion. To be ever harping on one String, though it be touch'd by the most Masterly Hand, will give little more Entertainment to the Ear, than the most confused and discordant variety of Sounds mingled by the Hand of a meer Bungler. To have the Eye for ever fix'd on one beautiful Object, would be apt to abate the Satisfaction, at least in our present State. Variety relieves and refreshes. It is so in the natural World. Hills and Valleys, Woods and Pasture, Seas and Shores, not only diversify the Prospect, but give much more Entertainment to the Eye, that can successively go from one to the other,

other, than any of them could singly do. And could we see into all the Conveniencies of things, how well they are fitted to each other, and the common Purposes of all, we shou'd find that the Diversity is as usefull as it is agreeable.

It is the same also with the World of Mankind. If all had a like Turn or Cast of Mind, and all were bent upon one Business or way of Living, it would spoil much of the present Harmony of the World, and be a manifest Inconvenience to the Publick. Perhaps one Part of Learning, or Method of Business, would be throughly cultivated and improved; but how many others must be neglected, or remain defective? And it would create Jealousy and Uneasiness among themselves. As Men are forc'd to justle in a Crowd: For there would not be sufficient Scope for every one to exert and display himself, nor so much Room for many to excel, when all must do it in one Way. Variety of Inclination and Capacity is an admirable Mean of common Benefit: It opens a wide Field for Service to Others, and gives great Advantage to Mens own Improvement: N.B.

And it is surprising to consider how great this Diversity is. It is almost as various as that of bodily Features and Complexion. There is no Instance of any kind of Learning or Business; any Thing relating to the Necessity or Delight of Life; not the meanest Office or the hardest Labour, but some or other are found to answer the different Purposes of each. They are carried through all

the Difficulties, in their several Ways, by the meer Force of a *Genius*. And attempt and atchieve that, with an high relish of Pleasure, which would give the greatest Disgust to others and utterly discourage them. This stirs up an useful Emulation, and gives full Scope for every one to show Himself and appear to advantage. And it is certainly for the Beauty and Advantage of the Body. As many Hands employed in different Ways about some noble Building, yet all help either to secure its Strength, or furnish out all the Convenience, or give a State and Grandeur to it.

The Wisdom and Beauty of Providence appear at once in this Variety and Distinction of Powers and Inclinations among Mankind. It is a very wise and a necessary Provision for the common Good, and the Advantage and Pleasure of particular Men. It answers to all the Ends and Occasions of Mankind. They are in this Way made helpful to one another, and capable of serving Themselves, and that without much trouble or fatigue. Business by this Means becomes a Pleasure. The greatest Labours and Cares are easy and entertaining to Him who pursues his *Genius*. Inclination still urges the Man on: Obstacles and Oppositions only sharpen his Appetite, and put Him upon summoning all his Powers, that He may exert Himself to the uttermost, and get over his Difficulties. All the several Arts and Sciences, and all the Improvements made in them from Time to Time; all the different

Offices

Offices and Employments of humane Life, are owing to this variety of Powers and Inclinations among Men. And is it not obvious to every Eye how much of the Conveniencies and Comforts of humane Life spring from these Originals? It is a glorious Display and most convincing Proof of the Interest of Providence in humane Affairs, and the Wisdom of its Conduct, to fit Things in this Manner to their proper Uses and Ends. And so to *sort* Mankind, and suit their Talents and Inclinations, that all may contribute somewhat to the Publick Good, and hardly one Member of the whole Body be lost in the Reckoning, useless to it self, or unserviceable to the Body: Were it otherwise, what large Tracts of humane Affairs would lie perfectly waste and uncultivated? Whereas now all the Parts of humane Learning and Life lie open to Improvement, and some or other is fitted by Nature, and dispos'd by Inclination, to help towards it:

And as Providence gives the Hint, Men should take it, and follow the Conduct of *Genius* in the Course of their Studies, and Way of Employment in the World; and in the Education and Disposal of their Children: Men too often in this Case consult their own Humour and Convenience, not the Capacity and Inclination of the Child: And are governed by some or other external Circumstance, or lower Consideration; as, what they shall give with them, or to whom to commit the Care of them, *&c.* Thus they after contrive unsuitable Marriages, on the single View of worldly Advantage: From this *N.B.*

Cause proceed fatal Effects, and many young Men of great Hopes, and good Capacities, miscarry in the after Conduct of Life, and prove useless or mischievous to the World. They turn off from a disagreeable Employment, and run into Idleness and Extravagance. If People better consider'd the peculiar *Genius* or proper Talents of their Children, and took their Measures of Treatment and Disposal thence, we should certainly find answerable Improvements and lasting good Effects. The several Kinds of Learning and Business would come to be more advanced, and the Lives of Men become more useful and significant to the World.

n.b.

I have known a large Family of Children, with so remarkable a Diversity of *Genius*, as to be a little Epitome of Mankind. Some studious and thoughtful, and naturally inclin'd to *Books* and *Learning*; Others diligent and ambitious, and disposed to *Business* and rising in the World. Some bold and enterprising, and loved nothing so well as the *Camp* and the *Field*; or so daring and unconfined, that nothing would satisfy but *going to Sea* and visiting Foreign Parts. Some have been gay and airy, Others solid and retired; Some curious and Observers of other Men; Others open and careless. In short, their Capacities have been as various as their Natural Tempers or Moral Dispositions.

n.b.

Now what a Blunder would be committed in the Education of such a Family, if, with this different Turn of Mind in the Children, there should be no difference made in the Management of them, or their Disposal in

the

the World. If all should be put into one Way of Life, or brought up to one Business. Or if in the Choice of Employment for Them, their several Bias and Capacity be not consulted, but the roving *Genius* mew'd up in a Closet, and confounded among Books. And the studious and thoughtful *Genius* sent to wander about the World, and be perfectly scattered and dissipated, for want of proper Application and closer Confinement. Whereas, one such a Family wisely educated, and dispos'd in the World, would prove an extensive Blessing to Mankind, and appear with a distinguished Glory; was the proper *Genius* of every Child first cultivated, and he then put into a Way of Life that would suit his Taste. n.b.

Genius is a part of natural Constitution, not acquir'd, but born with us. Yet it is capable of Cultivation and Improvement. It has been a common Question, whether a Man be born a Poet or made one? but both must concur. Nature and Art must contribute their Shares to compleat the Character. Limbs alone will not make a Dancer, or a Wrestler. Nor will *Genius* alone make a good Poet; nor the meer Strength of natural Abilities make a considerable Artist of any kind. Good Rules, and these reduc'd to Practice, are necessary to this End. And Use and Exercise in this, as well as in all other Cases, are a second Nature. And, oftentimes, the second Nature makes a prodigious Improvement of the Force and Vigour of the first.

It has been long ago determined by the

great Masters of Letters, that good Sense is the chief Qualification of a good Writer.

Scribendi recte sapere est & Principium & Fons.
Horat.

Yet the best natural Parts in the World are capable of much Improvement by a due Cultivation.

Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
Rectique cultus Pectora roborant. Horat.

The Spectator's golden Scales, let down from Heaven to discover the true Weight and Value of Things, expresses this Matter in a Way which at once shews, a *Genius*, and its Cultivation. "There is a Saying among the "*Scots*, that an Ounce of Mother-Wit, is "worth a Pound of Clergy. I was sensible "of the Truth of this Saying, when I saw "the difference between the Weight of natu-"ral Parts and that of Learning. I observ'd "that it was an hundred Times heavier than "before, when I put Learning into the same "Scale with it.

It has been observ'd, of an *English* Author, that he would be all *Genius*. He would reap the Fruits of Art, but without the Study and Pains of it. The *Lima Labor* is what he cannot easily digest. We have as many Instances of Originals, this way, as any Nation can produce. Men, who without the help of Learning, by the meer Force of natural Ability, have produc'd Works which were the Delight of their own Times, and have

been

been the Wonder of Posterity. It has been a Question, whether Learning would have improved or spoiled them. There appears somewhat so nobly Wild and Extravagant in these great *Genij*, as charms infinitely more, than all the Turn and Polishing which enters into the *French Bel Esprit*, or the *Genius* improved by Reading and Conversation.

But tho' this will hold in some very rare Instances, it must be much for its Advantage in ordinary Cases, that a *Genius* should be diligently and carefully cultivated. In order to this, it should be early watched and observ'd. And this is a matter that requires deep Insight into Humane Nature. It is not so easy as many imagine, to pronounce what the proper *Genius* of a Youth is. Every one who will be fiddling, has not presently a *Genius* for Musick. The Idle Boy draws Birds and Men, when he should be getting his Lesson or writing his Copy; *This Boy*, says the Father, *must be a* Painter; when alas! this is no more the Boy's *Genius* than the *Parhelion* is the true Sun. But those who have the Care of Children, should take some Pains to know what their true *Genius* is. For here the Foundation must be laid for improving it. If a Mistake be made here, the Man sets out wrong, and every Step he takes carries him so much farther from Home.

The true *Genius* being discovered, it must be supplied with Matter to work upon, and employ it self. This is Fuel for the Fire. And the fitting a *Genius* with proper Materials, is putting one into the Way of going through the World with Wind and Tide.

The

the best Use of it. What will the most exalted *Genius* signify, if the World reaps no Advantage from it? He who is possess'd of it, may make it turn to Account to himself, and have much Pleasure and Satisfaction from it; but it is a very poor Business, if it serves no other Purpose, than to supply Matter for such private and narrow Satisfaction. It is certainly the Intention of Providence, that a good *Genius* should be a publick Benefit; and to wrap up such a Talent in a Napkin, and bury it in the Earth, is at once to be unfaithful to God, and defraud Mankind.

Those who have such a Trust put into their Hands, should be very careful that they do not abuse it, nor squander it away. The best *Genius* may be spoiled. It suffers by nothing more, than by neglecting it, and by an Habit of Sloth and Inactivity. By Disuse, it contracts * Rust, or a Stiffness which is not easily to be worn off. Even the sprightly and penetrating, have, thro' this neglect, sunk down to the Rank of the dull and stupid. Some Men have given very promising Specimens in their early Days, that they could think well themselves; but, whether from a pusillanimous Modesty, or a lazy Temper at first, I know not; they have by Degrees contracted such an Habit of Filching and Plagiary, as to lose their Capacity at length for one Original Thought. Some Writers indeed, as well as Practitioners in other Arts, seem only born to copy; but it is Pity those, who have a Stock of their own, should so entirely lose it by Disuse, as to be reduc'd

* *Otium ingenii rubigo.*

duc'd to a Necessity, when they must appear in Publick, to borrow from others.

MEN should guard against this Mischief with great Care. A *Genius* once squandered away by neglect, is not easily to be recovered. *Tacitus* assigns a very proper Reason for this. " † Such is the Nature, saith he, of Humane Infirmity, that Remedies cannot be " applied, as quick as Mischiefs may be suf- " fered; and as the Body must grow up by " slow Degrees, but is presently destroyed; " so you may stifle a *Genius* much more easily " than you can recover it. For you'll soon " relish Ease and Inactivity, and be in Love " with Sloth, which was once your Aversion. This can hardly fall of ruining the best Capacity, especially, if from a neglect of severer Business, Men run into a Dissolution of Manners, which is the too common Consequence. The greatest Minds have thus been often wholly enervated, and the best Parts buried in utter Obscurity.

THOUGH Rules of Art may be of great Service to improve a *Genius*, it is very prejudicial, in many Cases, to fetter it self with these Rules, or confine itself within those Limits which others have fixed. How little would Science have been improv'd, if every new *Genius*, that applies himself to any Branch of it, had made other Mens Light, his *ne plus*

† *Natura infirmitatis humanæ, tardiora sunt remedia quam mala: & ut corpora lente augescunt, cito extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris, facillius quam revocaveris; subit quippe ipsius inertiæ dulcedo, & invisa primo desidia postremo amatur.* Tacit. Vit. Agricol. c. 3.

ultra, and resolved to go no farther into it, than the Road had been beaten before him. No doubt there were Men of as good natural Abilities in the Ages before the Revival of Learning, as there have been since. But they were cramped with the Jargon of a wordy and unintelligible Philosophy, and durst not give themselves the Liberty to think in Religion, without the Boundaries fixed by the Church, for fear of Anathemas, and an Inquisition. Till those Fetters were broken, little Advance was made, for many Ages together, in any useful or solid Knowledge. In truth, every Man who makes a new Discovery, goes at first by himself; and as long as the greatest Minds are content to go in Leading-strings, they will be but upon a Level with their Neighbours.

On the other Hand, Capacities of a lower size must be obliged to more of Imitation. All their Usefulness will be spoiled by forming too high Models for themselves. If they will be of Service, they must be content to keep the beaten Road. Should they attempt to soar too high, they will only meet with *Icarus's* Fate. A common *Genius* will serve many common Purposes exceeding well, and render a Man conspicuous enough, tho' there may be no distinguishing Splendor about him to dazzle the Beholders Eyes. But if he attempts any Thing beyond his Strength, he is sure to lose the Lustre which he had, if he does not also weaken his Capacity, and impair his *Genius*, into the Bargain So just in all Cases is the Poet's Advice to Writers.

Sumite

Sumite Materiam vestris qui scribitis æquam
Viribus. Horat.
Weigh well your Strength, and never undertake
What is above your Power.

And this brings to Mind another very common Occasion of ruining many a good *Genius*; I mean, wrong Application. Nothing will satisfie Parents, but their Children must apply their Minds to one of the learned Professions, when, instead of consulting the Reputation or Interest of their Children, by such a preposterous Choice, they turn them out to live in an Element no way suited to their Nature, and expose them to Contempt and Beggary all their Days; while at the same Time they spoil an Head, admirably turn'd for Traffick or Mechanicks. And he is left to bring up the Rear in the learned Profession, or it may be lost in the Crowd, who would have shined in Trade, and made a prime Figure upon the Exchange. Many have by this Means *run their Heads against a Pulpit*, (as a Satyrical *Genius* once expressed it) *who would have made admirable Ploughmen.*

There is a different Taste in Men, as to the learned Professions themselves, which qualifies and disposes them for the one, but would never make them appear with any Lustre in another. This has been often made evident in the different Figures, which some, who lived in Obscurity before, have made upon a lucky Incident that led them out of the mistaken Track into which they were first put. Where Providence does not relieve a *Genius* from this Error in setting out, the Man must be kept under the Hatches all his Days.

THERE are very different Manners of Writing, and each of them just and agreeable in their Kind, when Nature is followed, and a Man endeavours Perfection in that Style and Manner which suits his own Humour and Abilities. Some please, and indeed excell in a Mediocrity, * who quite lose themselves if they attempt the Sublime. Some succeed to a wonder in the Account of all Readers, whilst they confine themselves to close Reasoning, who, if they are so ill advis'd, as to meddle with Wit, only make themselves the Jest. † That is easy and agreeable which is natural; what is forc'd, will appear distorted and give Disgust.

IT is of fatal Consequence to a good *Genius*, to grasp at too much. "A certain Magistrate (says *Bruyere*) arriving, by his Merit, "to the first Dignities of the Gown, thought "himself qualified for every Thing. He "printed a Treatise of Morality, and published himself a Coxcomb. Universal *Genius* and universal Scholars are generally excellent at nothing. He is certainly the wisest Man, who endeavours to be perfectly furnished for some Business, and regards other Matters as no more than his Amusement.

A *Genius* being thus observed, humoured and cultivated, is to be kept in Heart, and upon proper Occasions to be exerted. Without this, it may sink and be lost. All Habits are weakned by Disuse. And Men who are furnished

* *Dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captat.* Horat.

† *Ingenio, sicut in Agro, quanquam alia diu serantur atque elaborentur, gratiora tamen quæ sua sponte nascuntur.* Tacit. de Orator, c. 6.

furnished with a *Genius*, for publick Usefulness, should put themselves forward; I mean, with due Modesty and Prudence, and not suffer their Talents to be hid, when a fair Opportunity offers to do Service with them. Indeed it is too common an Unhappiness for Men to be so placed, as to have no Opportunity and Advantage for shewing their *Genius*. As Matters are generally managed in the World, Men are for the most part staked down to such Business, in such Alliances, or in such Circumstances, that they have no proper Occasions of exerting themselves; but instead of that, are continually tugging and striving with things that are cross and ungrateful to them. And that must be a strong Mind indeed, that shall break through the Censures and Opposition of the World, and dare to quit a Station, for which a Man has been brought up, and in which he has acted for some Time, that he may get into another Sphere, where he sees he can act according to the Impulses of his *Genius*. Tho' such as have had the Courage and Skill to follow those Impulses, till they have gain'd the Stations which suited their Taste and Inclination, have seldom fail'd of appearing considerable. But Multitudes, by this Situation of Affairs, have been forc'd, in a manner, to stifle a *Genius*, because they could have no fair Opportunity of exerting it.

A crazy Constitution, and a Body liable to continual Disorders, call off the Attention of many a great Mind, from what might otherwise procure very great Reputation and Regard. Their *Genius* no sooner begins a little to exert itself, but the Spirits flag, and one unhappy

happy Ail or other, enfeebles and discourages the Mind.

LUST and Wine mightily obstruct all Attempts that require Application; and will neither allow a Man duly to furnish his Mind, nor rightly to use that Furniture he has. An Intrigue or a Bottle may sometimes give an Opportunity for a Man to shew his *Genius*, but will utterly spoil all regular and reputable Exertings of it. He who would put forth his *Genius* to the Advantage of Himself or the World, should give into no Pleasures that will enervate or dissolve his Mind. He must keep it bent for Business, or he will bring all Business to nothing.

CONCEIT and Affectation on one hand, and Peevishness and Perverseness of Temper on the other, will lay the best *Genius* under great Disadvantages, and raise such Dislike and Opposition, as will bear it down in spite of all its Force and Furniture. A graceful Mixture of Boldness and Modesty, with a Smoothness and Benignity of Temper, will much better make a Man's Way into the World, and procure him the Opportunity of exerting his *Genius*:

n.b.

BUT there is nothing lies as an heavier Weight upon a Man, or hinders Him more from shewing Himself to Advantage, and employing his great Abilities for the Service of Others; than the Quarrels and Contentions of Parties: Many have their Talents imprison'd, by being of the hated and sinking Side: Their Light is wholly smother'd and suppress'd; that it may not shine out with a Lustre

tre on the Party to which they belong, whether it be in Politicks or Religion; And all Struggles of a *Genius* are vain, when a Man is bornedown at once by Clamour and Power?

THIS is very discouraging to a Man who has taken much Pains in cultivating his *Genius*; and many have, without doubt, been tempted wholly to neglect themselves, from the Dread of these Discouragements. I own this Neglect is not to be excused altogether, though it grieves one that there should be any Occasion given for it. There is still Room for Men to follow and improve a *Genius*, and hope by it to benefit Mankind, and procure Regard to Themselves. And it is hard to say, what Way of exerting it will turn most to Account. Peculiar Honours are due to those who appear to Advantage in the *Pulpit*. Numerous Applauses and Preferments attend those who acquit themselves well at the *Bar*. There is a great deal of Renown to those who are eminent in the *Senate*. There are high Advantages to such as excel in *Counsel* and on *Embassies*. Immortal Lawrels will crown such as are brave, expert and victorious in *Arms*. There are the Blessings of Wealth and Plenty to those who manage well their *Trades* and *Merchandize*. The Names of the skilful *Architect*, the cunning *Artificer*, the fine, exact and well devising *Painter*, are sometimes enrolled in the Lists of Fame. The learned, experienced and successful *Physician*, may become as considerable for Repute and Estate, as one of any other Profession. *Musick* also may have its *Masters*, who shall be had in last-

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ing Esteem. The *Poets* Performances may be *more durable than Brass, and long lived as Time it Self. Every *Science* may have Professors that shall shine in the learned World. With all the Discouragements that may damp a *Genius*, there is yet a wide Field for it to exert it self, and Room to hope it will not be in vain.

I was going to add something of exerting one's *Genius* as an *Author*. But I found it would fill up too much Room in my Paper, should I enlarge on the several Ways of Mens appearing considerable. And I was so apprehensive of the Reputation, which the Divine, the Historian, the Critick, the Philosopher, and almost all the other Authors, have above us *Essay-Writers*, that I thought I should but lessen the Regards to my own *Genius*, should I have set to View the Advantages of Others. It will sufficiently gratify my Ambition as an Author, if the World will be so good natured as to think I have handsomely excus'd my self; and that I am tolerably fitted, in the Way in which I am, to give Entertainment to my Readers, and do them some Service.

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* *Exegi monumentum ære perennius,*
Regalique situ pyramidum altius;
Quod non Imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum series, & fuga temporum.

Horat.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 7. *line* 18. *read* War. *p.* 8. *l.* 15. *r. Diapason. p.* 9. *l.* 4. *r.* Men. *p.* 10. *l.* 3. *r.* judicious. *p.* 12. *l.* 28. *dele* of. *p.* 20. *l.* 3. *r.* recte.

THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. XI.

AN

ESSAY

TO PREVENT

Uncharitable Contentions

ABOUT THE

DOCTRINE

OF THE

TRINITY.

Since both Sides yield, that the Matter they dispute about is above their Reach, the wisest Course they can take, is, to assert and defend what is revealed; and not to be peremptory and quarrelsome about that, which is acknowledged to be above our Comprehension, I mean, as to the Manner how the Three Persons *partake of the* Divine Nature.

[*Stillingfleet's* Vindic. of the Doctrine of the Trinity. *Pref. pag.* 44.

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OF *Uncharitable Contentions* ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

THE Variety of Opinions, into which Men have fall'n, and are continually apt to fall, upon various Occasions and for various Reasons, must certainly produce, without great Wisdom and Caution, very sad and mischievous Effects. The World has been sufficiently sensible of these Mischiefs in former Experience. It has commonly

felt them in the Destruction of Peace and Charity, and sometimes in the Subversion of Justice and Religion.

'Tis on all Hands allow'd to be very desirable, that such Mischiefs should be prevented; at least, in their lamentable Effects. Hence it is that several Methods have been contriv'd, and try'd, but with little or no Success. Insomuch that one would be apt to conclude, there must have been some Mistake in the Remedy, or some Misapplication, that it has never succeeded; but on the contrary, that for the most Part, the Distemper has been encreas'd and enflam'd, instead of being abated or removed. In Truth there seems to have been a fundamental Mistake in all the Remedies usually thought of, that they have been applied to the *wrong Part*. They have commonly intended to *silence*, and put an *End* to the Difference, by some Authority or other; and so to prevent Mischief, by rooting out what was supposed the sole *Occasion* of it. But this has been looked upon, by very wise and able Men, as impracticable and impossible. They who have attempted it (says one) * *did like him, who clapt his Shoulder to the Ground to stop an Earthquake.* No such Method of Authority, however backed with Force, (tho' it be that of an *Inquisition*) has been able to put an End to all Differences of Opinion. Not the boasted Authority of the Church of *Rome*, as a Centre of Unity,

* *Taylor*'s Liberty of Prophecy, *p.* 2.

has

has been able to effect it, in its *own* Communion. What never *has been*, after so long and repeated Tryal, we may reasonably conclude never *will be*. For which Reason as well as many others most wise Men despair of Success from it.

It may then deserve Consideration, whether there is not some other Method, more practicable than this? Whether there be not some Way more agreeable to *Christian* and *Protestant* Principles, as well as to the Frame and Constitution of humane Nature? Whether the evil Symptoms and Mischiefs attending those Differences, have not proceeded more from the *ill Method of Cure*, than from the *Disease* itself? Whether, then, the most likely Method of Cure yet left to hope for, is not to be applied to the *Management* of the Questions in Dispute, and the *Behaviour* of the Persons who differ towards each other? In a Word, *Whether Charity and mutual Forbearance, Humanity and good Manners, Meekness and Love, do not deserve some few Experiments?* This is a Method that has not yet been found to fail. If it shall be said the Reason is, because it has not been tryed: Why, then, upon the next Experiment that is to be made, this will deserve a Preference, to every Method that has before been tryed, and upon each Tryal has failed.

I do not here mean any thing that should in the least abate a just Concern for *Truth*, or any fair and Christian *Methods* of defending and promoting it. These I would hope can never be inconsistent with that Love and

Charity,

Charity, which the eternal Laws of Reason unchangeably require of all Men; and to which the plainest Rules of Christianity oblige every Christian. A Man may surely have all that Concern and Zeal for the Faith, which either is, or possibly can be required of him, tho' he retain that Charity, and in all his Actions express that Moderation and Love, by which the Faith he is so much concern'd for, is always to work, and by which it is perfected. He gives hereby a greater and more useful Evidence of the Truth of his Faith, than by making the most subtil Defence, or using the most learned Arguments for his own Opinion. 'Tis certain a Man may do every thing that is necessary for his *own* Information and Establishment; and may besides, do every thing that Reason or Religion require for the Instruction or Recovery of *Others*; and yet preserve this Love, both in Temper, and Actions. It will hardly be a Reasonable or Christian Zeal, that proposes more than this. Nor will it be a wise Concern or prudent Zeal, that is not content with those Methods to which Reason and Religion direct.

So far one would think all Men should agree, whose Judgments are free and impartial: Yet how difficult is it to prevail even with very good People to see that their *Zeal* for *Truth* (as their other Virtues) requires a prudent Regulation and a wise Management. Men are so prone to act after *former Precedents*, how unreasonable soever; and the Prejudices in Favour of them are so many and strong; that I have thought it necessary

to

to say something in order to perswade Men to make *one* Experiment, how much *Charity* and *mutual Forbearance* would do.

And this as it would preserve them in the best Temper, so it will also be found the best Support and Defence of Truth. I thought this the more necessary, because I apprehend we have an Occasion that calls for it at present, as much as any Juncture of Affairs has done since the Reformation.

There is lately risen among us an unhappy Controversy, concerning a very high and difficult Point; the *Unity*, and *Distinction*, of the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*. When a like Dispute disturb'd the Church about 1500 Years ago, all, who know the History of those Times, know what Confusion and Mischief it occasioned. The first of the Methods I mentioned was then tryed, I mean, of reducing all to an Unity of *Opinion*, by *new Determinations*, *Subscriptions* and *Excommunications*; and, that in all their Variety; and supported with all the Power of the Empire: But, with what *ill Success*, the long and furious Contentions of those unhappy Times declare. And yet, how many are still fond of trying the same unlikely Methods over again? Can no former Experience make us wise? No Calamities of the *Church* heretofore, give us warning to avoid those Rocks on which it has split more than once? That I may not beat the Air with general Remarks, I would bring the Matter home to the present Case; and endeavour to shew, how unfit it is, in any present Disputes on this high and mysterious Point, to pursue the same Me-

Methods of *New Tests* of Faith, and Determinations of Doctrine; or to deny the common Pledge of *Christian Communion* to each other. How improper must it be to oblige Men to receive, any *other* Determinations than what the *holy Scriptures* have given? Or to set up any *Form of Words* of humane Composition, as a clearer and more particular Decision of the Doctrines of Revelation, than the *Holy Ghost*, the Author of all Revelation, has thought fit to decide them by?

If it shall appear it is not fit so to decide the Doctrines of Revelation, or to require Men to receive such Determinations; it must of Necessity follow, That where Men do declare their Assent to all the Expressions in which those Doctrines are delivered in Scripture, tho' they should not receive, or tho' it may be they object to Explications in *unscriptural Words*, they are not to be deny'd the Communion of the Christian Church, merely on that Account. For on Supposition that such Determinations are not fit to be made, a Refusal to receive such Determinations can be no Fault: Nor can a Mistake, not contrary to some necessary Determination, be possibly a Fault of such a Nature as to deserve *Exclusion* from the Christian Church. So that if the first Point be made good, that no such Decisions are to be made; the other must necessarily follow, That no Man is to be deny'd Christian Communion for not receiving improper and unauthorized Determinations. And that all *pure Humane Decisions* are thus improper and unfit in Questions about the Trinity, above

bove all others, I shall endeavour to persuade from the following Considerations.

FIRST, A more *particular and minute Decision* than the *Scriptures* have made, of any Questions relating to these high Points, must be a Matter too hard and difficult for *humane Determination.* Barely to say, that a Doctrine is high and mysterious, intends that it will hardly admit of plain Reasoning, or of any Decision by Language suited to our present Capacity. These Doctrines in particular, have been judged in many Points inexplicable: And sure They must have a very hard and unfit Task, who take upon Themselves to explain what is allow'd to be inexplicable. It has been justly asserted that the Doctrines of *Revelation* are not to be brought down to the Maxims of *Philosophy*; and the *Faith* of *Christians* is not to be establish'd or rejected by the *Schools* of *Plato* or *Aristotle.* Can the good honest People, who have neither Opportunity nor Capacity for *philosophical* Enquiries, be oblig'd to understand what is past their Understanding? Or to receive That, upon the Penalty of forfeiting the Name and Privileges of Christians, for a Point of Faith, which They cannot apprehend? And yet where *Philosophy* must be called in to assist in an Explication, this must be the Case of the far greatest Number of Christians in all Places; it may be, of Ninety nine in an Hundred. And it deserves a particular Remark, that the philosophical Terms made use of in these Enquiries, and the Decisions thereupon, are of all others the most difficult and abstracted. The Words and

Phrases are so much out of the Way of common Use, that there are but few, even of the learned Professions themselves, that have any Notion of their Meaning, much less that can reason upon them. *Nature*, *Substance*, *Essence*, *Personality*, *Individuation*, &c. tho' some of the easiest Words, are yet put to signify such abstract Notions, that it is plain, Persons who have spent many Years in learning their Meaning and Use do not rightly understand them. 'Tis manifestly owing to this, that there is so much Uncertainty and Confusion, such Misunderstanding of Others, and too often of Themselves, observable in many who have thought they were qualify'd to write and instruct the World in these Matters. I might easily put this beyond Doubt, by notorious Instances; but as I intend not to reflect on any, so I may trust every one, who has the least Knowledge of the many Writings on this Head, to furnish himself with Proofs of it from his own Observation. Now if this be the Case, when Men go from the plain Words and Decisions of Scripture, How can these Things be fit or proper for Humane Determinations? What Good, can Wise Sober Honest Persons expect from them? Not surely to give the Generality of Christians any further Light or better Understanding by such artificial Decisions: For to give Men Terms they cannot understand, is to amuse and confound them; but can never inform or instruct them. One might as well expect to instruct People, who know no other Language than their Mother Tongue, by a Lecture in *Greek* and *Hebrew*.

Nor

Nor can it be reasonably hoped, that such Methods should put an End to those Disputes that shall at any Time unhappily arise upon these Heads. For when once Men get into *Metaphysical Fastnesses*, there is hardly any Way whereby to drive them out again. Let Men begin to play with those hard and abstract Terms, and they who love the Sport, or have any Ends to serve by it, (especially if they have a little Skill in *Polemical Tricks*) may keep up the Ball of Contention for ever. Can those Things then, be thought proper for Humane Decisions, which when they are produced and applied, are so abstruse and difficult, that a great Part of the World, for Want of Capacity, can't be the better for them? And is not another Part of the World, since there is so much Advantage given to quarrelsome and contentious Tempers, like to be the worse for them?

To make us more sensible of the Force of this Argument, let us a little consider the Example of *Christ* and his *Apostles*. No Christian sure, will dispute their Wisdom, or be afraid of following their Steps. How did our Blessed LORD in his own Instructions accomodate himself to the Weakness and Capacities of his Disciples? *I have many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now* *. These were Things of very great Importance to the Nature of his own Gospel; and yet he waits a proper Time, and a proper Method even of Inspiration, to instruct them

* *John* 16. 12.

therein. Was there such Condescention in the Author of our Faith to the Infirmities of his Disciples, and that not only from the Weakness of their Judgment, but in some Measure also of their perverted Minds; and shall we, who are to be Followers both of his Faith and Example, not consider the unavoidable Weakness of Humane Nature? Shall not we allow for the *faultless* Incapacity of common Understandings, when they cannot take in what the most Elevated and Improved very hardly attain to.

To this we may add the Practice of St. *Paul*, so conformable to the Example of his Saviour. * *And I, Brethren, could not speak unto you as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto Babes in Christ. I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.* The *Doctors*, they valued in Prejudice to the Apostle, had bewildred them, with pretending to a deeper Insight into the Christian Religion, than the Apostle saw they were fit for, at that Time. So that what greater Matters soever he had to impart to them, he thought it proper to wait for a Season when their Minds were better prepared to receive them. So far was the *Apostle* from *imposing* upon them what they were incapable of receiving, or what they might shew an Indisposition toward, or might be likely to make an ill Use of; or, from the necessary Circumstances and Condition of their

* 1 *Cor.* 3. 1, 2.

Lives,

Lives, could not give a long and critical Attention to. That we may not look upon this, as the Apostle's Conduct in *One* particular Case only, he has passed it into a General Canon: *Him that is weak in the Faith receive ye, * but not to doubtful Disputations.* What Mischiefs the Want of a Regard to this *Canon* has occasioned, in many Instances, I shall not here enumerate; but I hope I may, without Offence, say, that if any Weakness of Faith is to be overlook'd, any doubtful Disputations to be avoided, such surely are the natural, necessary, Weaknesses of Thought and Judgment, which will ever be found in the greatest Number of Christians; and such are those Disputes which are absolutely above the Capacity of the Majority, by far, of Good People in every Age of the World.

Questions of this Kind seem, in their own Nature, to call for the utmost Caution. And it was wisely taken Notice of by *Constantine*, in his Letter to *Alexander* and *Arius*, on Occasion of their Difference: 'What Man (says he) is able exactly and accurately to comprehend Things so very high and difficult? Who can well and worthily explain them? Or if any Man should imagine himself able, how small a Part of the Common People is it that he can instruct therein? Who can ever secure himself from the Danger of some great Miscarriage, when engaged in the Subtilties of such Questions?

* *Rom.* 14. 1.

Here,

'Here, a Multiplicity of Words ought to 'be restrain'd, lest thro' their own Weak-'ness, or Insufficiency to explain such Que-'stions, or the slow Understanding of them 'that hear them, and Incapacity to judge 'rightly of such Arguments, the Church be 'drawn into the Danger either of Blasphe-'my on one Hand, or of Division on the 'other.' †

These *Methods* of *Peace*, we see were wisely thought on, at the Beginning of those unhappy Troubles. But Mens Passions were too much heated to leave Room for the Direction of a calm Judgment. What they would not receive as *Good Advice*, they were however resolv'd (as it should seem) to make a *true Prophecy*. And so the *Church* of *Christ* was miserably torn in Pieces between them.

I am sensible that what I have said stands liable to this Reply: The *Importance* of *these Doctrines* to *Christianity*; their absolute Necessity to a right Understanding of the *Person*, and therewith the *Office*, and *Mediation*, of our Blessed Saviour; with the great Danger of Errors in Points so essential to the Christian Religion; supersede all the Considerations I have mention'd: Forasmuch as what is necessary to be known, be it never so high, mysterious or difficult, must be learnt; and therefore is to be taught; and that with the greater Exactness, and more accurate Determinations, that Men may be secured from Errors where the Difficulty of

† *Euseblus.* Vit. *Const.* Lib. 2, C. 69.

the

the Question makes it more easy for them to mistake: And since it is manifest that Men are apt to hide their Errors by a wrong Use of Scripture Expressions, it is necessary to fix their Meaning and Consequences by more determinate Explications.

Now in Answer to this, I would propose in the

SECOND Place, another Consideration, that however important and necessary these Doctrines be in *Themselves*, yet it cannot be necessary to determine *any thing* concerning them that the *Scriptures have not determined*; or to decide them by any *other Explications* than the Word of God has given of them. This is an immediate Consequence from that *Perfection* of the Holy *Scriptures*, which all *Protestants* profess to maintain and contend for, against the contrary bold and unjust Pretensions of the *Roman Church*. That Church unhappily stands in Need of *other Foundations* of Faith than the *Holy Scriptures*, that may establish for them, *some* Things no where to be found in Scripture, and may countenance them in *others*, with a *Non Obstante* to the Scriptures. But Protestants sure have no Occasion for the same Helps; nor will ever be brought to give up the *Perfection* of *Scripture*, because it is not perfect *enough*, to serve their *Purposes*. I must own, 'tis in my Account a mighty Prejudice to any Methods whatever, when they lead Men into the hard Necessity of contradicting themselves. And this must be the Case of those, who cry up the compleat Perfection of Scripture, on the one Hand; and on the other, decry it so far as

if

if it is not able of it self, without a good deal of their Assistance, to direct us in some of the most necessary and important Points of the Christian Faith. This is too like the direct *Boys Play* of the *Papists*, (as Mr. *Chillingworth* justly calls it) who acknowledge the Scriptures to be a perfect Rule, forasmuch as a Writing can be a Rule; only they deny that it excludes unwritten Tradition: So these Men own the Bible to be a perfect Rule, only that it wants some further Decisions, and Interpretations in some material Points of Faith. This is as if they should say (to use Mr. *Chillingworth*'s Words) We acknowledge it to be as perfect a Rule as a Writing can be, only we deny it to be as perfect a Rule as a Writing may be: Either therefore they must revoke their Acknowledgment, or retract their Retraction of it: For both cannot possibly stand together. For if they will stand to what they have granted, that Scripture is as perfect a Rule of Faith, as a Writing can be, (and I will make bold to suppose *Protestants* will allow as much of the Perfection of Scripture as *Papists* have expresly done) they must grant it both so *compleat* that it needs no *Addition*, and so *evident* that it needs no *Interpretation*: For both these Properties are requisite to a *perfect Rule*; and a Writing is capable of both these Properties. That both these Properties are requisite to a perfect Rule, it is apparent, because *that* is not perfect in any Kind, which wants some Parts belonging to its Integrity; as he is not a perfect Man who wants any Part appertaining to the Integrity of a Man; and there-

therefore that which wants any *Accession* to make it a perfect Rule, *of it self*, is not a perfect Rule. And then, the *End* of a Rule is to *regulate* and *direct*: Now every Instrument is more or less perfect in its Kind, as it is more or less fit to attain the *End* for which it is ordain'd; but nothing obscure, or unevident, while it is so, is fit to regulate and direct them to whom it is so; therefore it is requisite also to a Rule, so far as it is a Rule, to be evident; otherwise indeed it is no Rule, because it cannot serve for Direction. I conclude therefore, that both these Properties are requir'd to a *perfect Rule*, both to be so *compleat* as to need no Addition, and to be so *evident* as to need no Interpretation. *

Now that a Writing (such as the Scripture) is capable of both these Perfections, (he further adds) † is so plain, that I am even ashamed to prove it. For he that denies it, must say, that something may be *spoken* that cannot be *written*. And having asked whether they (the *Papists*) can give such Interpretation of all Obscurities in the Faith as shall need no *further Interpretation*, he proceeds in this Manner, very much to our Purpose: 'No Man can without Blas-'phemy deny, that Jesus Christ, if he had 'pleas'd, could have writ us a Rule of Faith 'so plain and perfect, as that it should have 'wanted neither any Part to make up its

* *Chillingworth*, Part 1. Chap. 2. Sect 6.
† *Ibid.* S. 7.

'Integrity, nor any Clearness to make it 'sufficiently Intelligible: And if Christ could 'have done this, then the Thing might 'have been done; a Writing there might 'have been endowed with both these Pro-'perties. Thus therefore I conclude, a 'Writing may be so perfect a Rule as to 'need neither Addition, nor Interpretation; 'but the Scripture you (even *Papists*) ac-'knowledge a perfect Rule, forasmuch as a 'Writing can be a Rule; therefore it needs 'neither Addition nor Interpretation'.

I have chosen to use the Words of Mr. *Chillingworth*, both to preserve in this Argument the inimitable Strength of his Reasoning, and to shew at the same Time, the true Protestant Doctrine in this essential Point of Controversy with the *Papists*. And we may further observe, that the most judicious Defender of the *Church* of *England* has guarded this Doctrine in the same Manner, when replying to the Argument of the *Dissenters* from the Perfection of Scripture, against the Imposition of any Thing not commanded in Scripture as a necessary Term of Communion.

Mr. *Hooker* * having made a Distinction between Matters of *Discipline* and Matters of *Faith* and *Salvation*, thus determines concerning the *Perfection of Scripture* with respect to *Both*: We teach that whatsoever is unto Salvation termed necessary, by Way of Excellency; whatsoever it standeth all Men upon

* *Eccles.* Pol. B. 3. S. 3. P. 132.

to

to know, or do, that they may be saved; whatsoever there is, whereof it may be truly said, this not to believe, is eternal Death and Damnation, or this every Soul that will live must duly observe; of which Sort the *Articles* of *Christian Faith*, and the *Sacraments* of the Church of Christ are: All such Things, if Scripture did not comprehend, the Church of God should not be able to measure out the Length, and the Breadth of that Way wherein for ever she is to walk: *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks* never ceasing some to abridge, some to enlarge, all to pervert; and obscure the same. But as for those Things that are accessary hereunto; those Things that so belong to the Way of Salvation, as to alter them is no otherwise to change that Way, than a Path is changed by altering only the uppermost Face thereof, which be it laid with Gravel, or set with Grass, or paved with Stones, remaineth still the same Path; in such Things, because Discretion may teach the Church what is convenient, we hold not the *Church* further tied herein unto *Scripture*, than that against Scripture, Nothing be admitted in the Church.

It is here remarkable that this judicious Writer very plainly asserts the compleat Perfection of Scripture, in Things of *Supernatural Revelation*, and all Points of Faith and Practice *necessary to Salvation*; at the same Time he defends and claims Power for the *Church* to determine Things, not necessary, and convenient only as necessary to the *outward Forms of Worship*. It is hence certain he did not grant so much as Mr. *Cartwright*

and the other *Puritan Writers* pleaded for. So that here we see the unanimous Sense of the *English* Protestants; some indeed pleading for more, but all granting thus much, That nothing but what was comprehended in *Scripture* could be a Part of that *Faith* or *Practice* that is *necessary to Salvation.*

Now when this comes to be fairly considered in its just Consequences, it will I think appear, that the *Importance* of the Points in Question, is so far from being a Reason why they should be determined by *unscriptural Decisions*, that it is a very strong Argument against their being so determined. For the greater their Importance is, (suppose of absolute Necessity to Salvation,) they cannot then, without giving up the Perfection of the Scriptures, be any otherwise determined, than as the *Scriptures* themselves have determined them. Because then, in the most plain and obvious Sense, the Scriptures would not be a *perfect Rule* in Matters of *Salvation*, if they had not directed us to all Things, and that with sufficient Clearness and Evidence, that were necessary to Salvation. So that in this View the Question seems to be brought to a very near and plain Point; and the Holy Ghost has himself already decided it: For what he *has* determined is what he *judges fit* to be determin'd; and what he *has not* determined, manifestly in his Judgment was *not necessary* to be determined. Hereupon the very Supposal, that a Question wants *other* Decisions than those of *Scripture*, or a further Interpretation of Scripture that shall authoritatively determine

mine its Meaning, is, by a very easy and just Consequence to declare, that Question does not need to be determined *at all*. For the very Supposal, that the Scriptures have not determined it, (as it must ever be supposed where further Decisions, or authoritative Interpretations are said to be necessary,) does involve in it this further Supposal, That the Scriptures declare, it is a Question that needs not be determined. In such Cases to attempt it, is to put Reason and *Philosophy*, the Judgment or Authority of Men, above the Scriptures, as well as to derogate from their Perfection; whatever Men may say, to take off Appearances to the contrary. It was therefore a very just, as well as smart Reflection, Father *Paul* tells us was made on the *Decrees* of the *Council* of *Trent* concerning *Justification*; 'That they had so 'distinctly settled the several Causes of it, 'that if *Aristotle* had not assisted them, we 'must have wanted many Articles of the 'Christian Faith'. Let us leave the *Roman* Church, which pretends to be an *infallible Judge* of Controversy, to give such Honour to an Heathen Philosopher; Protestants, I hope, will always have a greater Regard to the Honour of CHRIST.

If it shall, notwithstanding, be said, That what may be proved from Scripture by a a just and *lawful Consequence*, is to be looked upon as decided and determined by the *Scriptures themselves*.

I answer briefly, It certainly is so to all who *see* such Consequences to be just and lawful; it is so to all Men who apprehend such

such Proof; but this arises not from the *Nature* of the *Consequence*, but the *Judgment* and *Conscience* of the Person who *perceives* it to be a true Consequence: For all Consequences and Decisions, in themselves considered, are no other than *humane Reasonings*, in which there may be *Sophistry*, as well as right Reasoning: And therefore, there may be Uncertainty and *Error*, as well as Security and *Truth*. So that in this Case, every Man is to see for himself, how fair and just such Consequences are; and even in so doing he must ever look upon such Consequences as they truly are, the Reasonings of *fallible Men*, in which they may be mistaken.

These Consequences must then be always distinguished from the Authority of the *Holy Scriptures* themselves: And how useful soever they may be for *Instruction* or *Persuasion*, they never can have Authority to *determine* Mens Faith. This may further help us to another Consideration, in the

THIRD Place, That such Determinations are not only unnecessary, but also *impossible*; because there is no *possible Means* by which to make them. The Enquiry is only about such Questions as the Scriptures have not themselves *expresly* decided; and there is no possible Means to decide them, after it has seem'd good to infinite Wisdom to leave them undecided. For if it is possible to decide them any other Way than by Divine Revelation, it must be by *Authority* lodged in *some* Persons to decide for *others*; and by some *Fitness* and *Capacity* in such Persons, for such a Purpose.

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But neither of these are any where to be found. Indeed the *Papists* have boasted of *such Authority* among them, but are strangely divided where to place it; so that if they were never so sure they had it *somewhere*, unless they were certain and agreed *where it was*, it would be full out as useless to them, as if they had it *not at all*.

It must be owned, all *Protestants* have not talked so consistently upon this Head as might be wished, or as some of their other avowed Principles should teach them to do. Yet a Necessity of opposing the Pretence of the *Papists* has made them speak out enough to destroy all their other inconsistent Ways of talking on this Head. For as they have disclaimed an *infallible Judge* of Controversy, they have in Effect disqualified *every Man* to determine Questions of Faith for *others*. Since no Man has a sure Way, whereby to ascertain the Consequences he draws from Scripture, that alone is subversive of all Claims of such Authority: For nothing can be plainer than this, That when a Man's Faith stands upon such *Authority*, it does not stand upon the Word of God, but upon an uncertain Supposition, that they who are his Directors, have rightly understood the Mind of Christ.

Now as such Supposition may possibly be false, as well as true, a previous Question must first be examined, before their Decisions can have any Authority at all; That is, in Reality, they never have any proper Authority, but the *Truth* of *their Judgment* and Opinion is to be examined, as every *other* Man's

Man's is. In such Case they are truly so far from having Authority over others, that all other Men who are concerned have hereby an Authority over them; or, in plain Words, are not to submit to *their Decisions*, but to the Result of their *own Inquiry*, Whether their Decisions are *right* or *wrong*.

Many, I know, have endeavoured various Ways to find out a Medium, but all in vain. The Question is so obstinate, as to admit but of one plain Answer; Yes, or No. Either that there is an absolute Authority, or, that there is None. And this must ever be the Case, where the last Resort is to the private Judgment and Conscience of every Christian. And wherever that is admitted in any one Case, it must by necessary Consequence draw after it every other Point, which any Person shall think fit to inquire into, or see Reason to dissent from.

To bring this Matter yet closer to my present Purpose, Whatever may be said in Matters of Prudence, and outward Order; yet in Points of *sole Revelation*, there can be no Authority but what is *Infallible*; none but what is founded on *Inspiration*. As what is known of those Doctrines could never have been known but by Revelation, nothing further can be known of them, or certainly taught concerning them, but by the same Method of Revelation.

n.b.

Nor is the Case at all altered, by saying, Nothing is further intended by such Decisions, but *ascertaining* what is *already revealed*. For that in the Event amounts to just the same thing. Seeing that when I am to receive

ceive any Doctrines of *sole Revelation*, I receive them *solely*, because they are *revealed*, and upon the Authority of *inspired Teachers*: But if I must stand in need, (as some would pretend) of *their Decisions*, to fix and ascertain the *true Sense* and Meaning of Revelation, and that perhaps in long and obscure Consequences; 'tis plain I must then depend, not on *Revelation it self*, but on *some Mens Sense* and *Opinion* of Revelation; which neither is nor possibly can be a Revelation to me. What I see *my self* in God's Word, has the Force of a Revelation to me; but what *Another* Man sees, or *says* he sees there, however right it may be in it self, is yet certainly no more than *his* Conscience and Judgment; which, in every fallible uninspired Man, it is intolerable Arrogance to set up as a Revelation of God, and is by no means to be received by others as such.

Upon this Foot, a Pretence to determine Questions, not determined in Scripture; or which is in effect the same, to fix by Consequences what shall be the Sense of Scripture, in Expressions supposed so doubtful as not to determine their own Meaning in Points of sole Revelation; is to substitute *Reason* in the room of *Revelation*, and the uncertain Arguments of *fallible* Men in the Place of *infallible* and inspired Teachers. That is, it would at once remove the Boundaries of *Faith* and *Reason*; and would soon subject all things in Revelation, to the Systems of *Philosophy* that shall happen at several Times to be in Fashion. This is by no means a vain or idle Fear; it has actually

happen'd so, in more Instances than one. As to the great Doctrines of the *Trinity*, there was a Time when *Plato* was supposed to know more of them, than the *Scriptures* themselves. It was not long before some others found out that *Aristotle* was a better Interpreter of Scripture than *Plato*. And not many Years ago, a noted Divine of our own Country discovered that Mr. *Des Cartes* was the best *Philosopher* of them all, to give the most clear and intelligible Account of these Matters. This, 'tis true, was found out to be *Heresy*; but many were of Opinion, that happened chiefly because *Aristotle* was so well secured, being in Possession of St. *Thomas*, and the *Master* of the *Sentences* himself. But in good Earnest, is not this to put the *Church* of God into a miserable Condition, when a Right to the Name and Privileges of *Christians* must depend not on *Scripture Qualifications*, but on *such Decisions* as the reigning Philosophy of the Times we live in, shall give to Doctrines of mere Revelation. I would hope this Consideration may have some Weight, with those especially, who profess a *great Concern* for the Honour of Divine Revelation. They, of all others, should be cautious, how they bring humane Reason and Philosophy into these Questions; lest they should be found doing *themselves*, and with their *own Hands*, what they profess to fear *others* are doing, and of which they seem to have such dismal Apprehensions. They would do well to consider a little, Whether *they* do not thus give others an *Handle* to bring in their *Philosophical* Explications, and

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even justify them in so doing; and whether the Time may not come, (perhaps then too late for a Remedy,) when they shall wish, 'They had prudently kept themselves within 'the Pale of Scripture, and had not volun-'tarily engaged their Adversaries on disad-'vantageous Ground'. These are, I should think, Considerations of such Moment, against all unscriptural Decisions of these Questions, as are sufficient to over balance any Convenience or Benefit that may be supposed from them; tho' it were certain some considerable Advantage would follow upon them. And yet, in Truth, that can never be well supposed, for what Good can be thought to proceed from such unlikely Means? What Benefit from a thing so very difficult to do, so needless to be done, nay, which in Effect is impossible? But, I think, we may carry this Point much further, and not only guard against it as an Objection, but make Use of it as a considerable Argument; I would therefore add in the

FOURTH Place, That the Consequences of such Determinations must be very *dangerous*, and greatly *prejudicial* to the *true Ends of Religion*. This Experience has shewn us in former Tryals; and we have Reason to expect it, whenever it shall be tryed over again. The Consequences are so natural, they can hardly ever fail. For Instance,

These Determinations tend naturally to bring in many *other Disputes*, and greatly encrease the *Causes* of *Division*. Such Decisions one would think, if good for any thing

at all, must be proper to put an *End* to *Disputes*, and silence all Opposition to the Truth; but in Fact it is quite *otherwise*. For we generally find, that instead of quitting our Hands of a former Controversy by these Means, we have only the Satisfaction of seeing our selves involved in two or three more upon them: And soon come to fall under the Charge of acting like those *skilful Workmen*, who are generally observed to make *two* Holes in mending *one*. For it usually happens, that no sooner do such Determinations come abroad, but instead of a respectful Silence, or a quiet Submission; new Questions are started. As, by what Authority they have taken upon themselves to judge and decide for others? *&c.* So that as Mr. *Chillingworth* observes of the *Papists*, the very *Judge* of *Controversy* becomes it self our *greatest Controversy*. And thus a new Game is put up, which must be run through all the Labyrinths of Church Power and Authority, in which a *Pope* himself may chance to meet with *appealing Bishops*. Thus a Question that was sufficiently intricate *before*, is made yet *more intricate*, by involving it with other Questions: Insomuch that by these Means it is fairly brought into a Way of being endless.

Besides, whatever Decisions Men can make, have another Misfortune of administring to new Quarrels; and that is, in the very *Interpretation* of the *Determinations* that shall be made. And for this there will ever be a great deal of Room, where the Terms necessary to be used are of a com

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plex Nature, and put to signify very abstract Notions. Nay, the more minutely Men decide such Questions, the greater Opportunity will there be to start new Disputes upon their Sense and Meaning. Thus it happened upon the famous Decision of the *Council* of *Nice*. It was thought by the *Fathers* there assembled, that the Word Ὁμοούσιος, would fully support Orthodoxy, and settle the Truth. But after all, how was the very Meaning of that Word immediately disputed in those Times? How has it been controverted since? It remains at this Day a very great Question what they intended by it. In our own Times, since the *Reformation*, how warmly have the different Parties in the *Predestinarian* Controversy disputed the *Meaning* of the *Articles* of the *Church*?

These, tho' very considerable Evils, are yet some of the *least* we may justly fear from such Decisions. For, they are naturally apt to make the *Men*, they are *design'd against*, more *obstinate* in their *Opinions*, and more warm and zealous than ever to *propagate* and *defend* them. Men hardly love to be driven to any thing; least of all to be forced in their Judgment and Opinions. To be forced to a *Submission* without *Conviction*, will ever sit heavy upon their Minds. 'Tis great odds but they will think themselves bound, to defend themselves from, what they will likely account, great Injustice; and will leave no Stone unturned to gain their Point. And since they find Humane Decisions are to determine their Controversy, they will probably attempt every Thing to gain the *Pow-*

er of Determination into their own Hands. How soon did *Athanasius* himself with the rest of the Orthodox feel this? Without which, in all likelihood, he had never been forced to complain the whole World was turned *Arian*. Nor had *Osius*, President of the Council of *Nice*, (a Man so famous for Learning, Prudence, and Piety,) been reduced to the hard Necessity, at almost an Hundred Years of Age, of leaving a lasting Blot upon his Character by subscribing to an *Arian Confession*. But 'tis when Men perceive a Cause is to be won by the Major Vote, that they grow obstinate, expecting when some Change or other, may give them the Power over those that at present keep them under; and then they propose to gratify at once their Ambition and Revenge. Sad indeed it is, such Passions should ever mix themselves in any Debates, especially in the Questions of Religion and Christianity: But a Man must have very little Knowledge of Humane Nature, or Experience in the Affairs of Life, who does not see this a very common and usual Effect of Things when brought to this State; and every wise Man ought justly to expect those Consequences of Things that are likely, and frequent. Thus the *only Good End* in View from such Decisions, is made next to *impossible*, when the *Prejudices* of Mens Minds are confirmed and settled by the Violence of their *Passions*.

But the worst Consequence of all still remains, and which very seldom happens to fail, I mean the *Mischief it does to practical Religion*, and the Hazzard there is even of losing

losing it in the Quarrel. As Peace may be bought too dear, when it must be purchased with the Loss of *Truth*: So *Truth* it self will, in its Turn, be also bought too dear, if we must pay for it with the Loss of *practical Religion.* For to what Purpose is it we *retain* the Truth, if we have no *Use* for it while we have it? Does not the Benefit of Truth it self consist in this, that it either directs us to the *Paths* of Holiness, true Piety and eternal Happiness; or inclines *us to walk* therein, and leaves proper Impressions on our Minds to incite us to all those Virtues and Graces, wherein practical Religion consists? But how can this be well expected, when Mens Minds are diverted, by abstruse Speculations, from attending to the practical Influence of those very Truths, they are so warm for? And what Good can be wrought by any Truths when their Passions are so disturbed, that their Affections are incapable of any just or lasting Impressions? How many Persons will it discourage from good, religious, and holy Purposes and Resolutions, when they see Men so divided in Questions of the highest Importance, if Humane Decisions in the great Doctrines of Religion must be taken for such? What Uncertainty and Irresolution must it occasion, when they see good and learned Men divided, and, unhappily in the Warmth of Dispute, charging each other with very great, perhaps with damnable Errors? How must many an Honest Mind stand in Suspence, doubtful which Way to take, and fearful of both, least they chance to hit upon the

Wrong? How may some be possibly tempted into the most fatal Snares! On the one Hand, to get rid of their Uncertainty, they may be tempted to throw themselves into the Arms of a *Church* that makes the boldest Pretences to a certain and infallible Cure for *all Doubts*; or, on the other Hand, they may be provok'd to throw of *all* Religion, till Men shall be agreed where the *true Religion is*. How many may hereby be exposed to *Scepticism*, in such an Age as ours more especially, and dispute themselves out of every Thing tho' never so plainly reveal'd in Scripture, when they shall see how weakly some Things of Humane Decision, are advanced as of equal Importance and Authority with the Scriptures; and defended by some as such, at the same Time they are freely and warmly censured and attacked by others? How must these Things unsettle and confound many an honest good Christian, and fill his Soul with endless Doubts and Fears? What a perpetual Uneasiness and Perplexity must he have within himself? And how will this cramp the Vigour of his Mind, make his Care and Diligence abate, and render fruitless all his serious Resolutions, and Endeavours, after further Attainments in useful Knowledge and real Piety? The *Heart* will be likely neglected, where all a Man's Time, and Concern is taken up to furnish his *Head* with *Controversy*; and with such high and difficult Controversy too, that all his Time will hardly be sufficient for it. When he is once entered into a boundless Field of Contention, that shall engross all his *Thoughts* and

and *Zeal*, for the Party which he happens to fall in with, it may soon eat up his brotherly Love and Charity. And when once that is gone, we may easily foresee what will likely become of his religious Love of God too. Instead of *useful Meditations* on the infinite *Mercies* of God, and suitable *Impressions* of his *Goodness* on our *Hearts*; we may be in Danger of spending all our Time in Quarrelling, whether some subtil Men have rightly defined the *Unity* of his *Nature*. Instead of considering the *Love* of CHRIST our Redeemer, how and wherein it should *constrain us to follow his Example*, in all *Purity*, *Meekness* and *Charity*; we may be wholly taken up in fighting with each other about the Manner of his *ineffable Generation*. So likewise instead of attending to the Motions of the Holy Ghost, and improving them to our further Stability in Faith, Increase in Love, and attaining to the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; we may unsettle our Faith, weaken our Love, and render all Peace and Unity impossible, by fierce and unchristian Contentions, how to adjust the Difference between *Generation* and *Procession*. We have seen the *Eastern* and *Western* Parts of the World irrecoverably divided from each other, by putting into a *Creed*, the *Procession* of the *Holy Ghost* from the *Son*, as well as the *Father*. It may do us no Harm to learn Wisdom now at their Expence: At least let us make One Experiment of the Virtues of *Meekness* and *Charity*. Let us see for a small Time what they can do: And I am perswaded if they are ever tried, the E-

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vent will fully answer Expectation: And None that sincerely wish to have all Breaches healed, will set them aside for the future, to try again those Methods of *Authority* and *Force*, which have ever widened our Breaches, and encreased our Divisions. Those Men must have wretched Spirits and Apprehensions, who shall set up *that* again as a Sovereign Remedy, which has been usually found much worse than the Disease.

THE *Papers* I have here laid together for the Use of the Publick, were put into my Hands by a very *particular Friend*, who allowed me to do with them what I pleased: And tho' they were writ for his own Use a *considerable Time ago*, they appear so well fitted to serve the Cause of *Liberty* and *Truth* in the *present Juncture*, that I reckon it an Advantage to my *Essays*, I can place such a One as *This* amongst them.

FINIS.

Lately Publish'd

THE *Occasional Paper*, Vol. III. Numb. I. Of Retractations.
No. II. Of Bugbears.
——III. Two Letters; One to the Rev. Dr. *Prideaux*, Another to the Author of this Paper.
——IV. Several Letters.
——V. Of the Abuse of Liberty.
——VI. Letters to the Author.
——VII. Of Divisions.
——VIII. Some farther Thoughts upon Divisions.
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THE

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. III. NUMB. XII.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

PERSONS of FIGURE,

AND OF

ESTATES,

AND TO

ALL in GENERAL;

With Relation to the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners.

LONDON:

Printed for EM. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*; J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*; J. HARRISON, under the *Royal-Exchange*; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*. MDCCXIX.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

PEOPLE of ALL RANKS.

IN Two former Papers I have taken the Liberty of Addressing to *Magistrates*, and to the *Clergy*, that I might engage them to think of some Methods for *Suppressing Vice* and *Prophaneness*; and, if they could not propose *better* and more effectual Methods, than those *already* pursued by the SOCIETIES for *Reformation of Manners*, I was in hope of prevailing with *Some*, at least, to fall in with and assist *those Societies* in their brave and laudable Attempts.

I do not yet find any new Measures so much as offered; nor have I met with any Objections against Those which *are taken*, but what will lie against *all* Reforming Endeavours whatsoever, where *legal Prosecutions* are

made neceſſary. And it is an intolerable Impeachment of the Wiſdom of the *Legiſlature*, to ſuppoſe, that ſo *many* Laws are made for puniſhing *Immoralities*, but that no Men are to be Encouraged, who would ſet themſelves to take care of the *Execution* of ſuch Laws: If Criminals are to be *puniſhed*, they muſt be *convicted*: And how ſhall that be, without *Contributors* and *Proſecutors*; without ſome to give *Evidence*, and others to give *Countenance* to them in ſo doing?

I was ambitious *firſt* to gain the favourable Regards of *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters*, who have peculiar Advantages by their diſtinguiſhed Merit, and publick Influence, to promote the Common Good: It is *now* my Concern, to make People of *all Ranks* ſenſible, of the Need there is for their Concurrence and Help, to reform a *vicious Age*. I have reaſon to believe that what I have written before, was not altogether without Acceptance and Succeſs: And therefore, I promiſe my ſelf, that the Freedom I ſhall now uſe in this more *general Addreſs*, will be of ſome Service.

The glorious, but difficult Undertaking, requires all Hands at work, and every one to bear his Part. The Body *Politick*, like the *Natural* Body, conſiſts of various Members; and tho' ſome are more noble and excellent, like the Head and Eyes, to govern and direct; yet there is need of the leſs noble and meaner Parts, like the Hands and the Feet, to act and execute: In the Apoſtle's beautiful Alluſion; *The Body is not*

one

one Member, but many; the Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you: And *those Members of the Body which seem to be feeble, are necessary,* 1 Cor. xii, 21.

I shall consider the Body of the People, according to their different *Circumstances* of Life, and Capacities of Service; and the different *Purposes* and Ends they are capable of serving in the Business of *Reformation.*

It would be a singular Advantage, if Persons of noble *Birth* and *Condition,* would countenance the *Gentlemen* concerned in this Honourable Attempt, by speaking Well of the Design, and Kindly to Those engaged in it: Representing it favourably upon proper Occasions to our gracious *Sovereign*; and frowning upon those who would reproach and ridicule it. And, with all Deference to your superior Rank, to give Countenance to real Virtue and its zealous Friends, is no dishonour to the highest Character; nor would it sully the Glory, or sink the Dignity of the greatest Personage. No, it would add an Ornament to *Majesty* it self; and give a Lustre to all the Streams which flow from that *Fountain* of Honour. There is not a more glorious Character in all the *Heathen* History, than that of the *Roman* Senator, *Cato.* And what is it that has rais'd him to such distinguished Fame, but the severe *Virtue* of his *own* Conduct, and his great Concern to make his *Fellow-Citizens* Virtuous? If this was the Way of fixing a lasting Renown to the Character of an *Heathen* Senator, can it be a Disgrace to a

Christian

Christian Nobleman to take the same Course? It would exalt the Character, and improve the Esteem of those of the most shining Qualities, and conspicuous Merit, among the best Part of Mankind. Let the SOCIETIES have your Smiles, and their Enemies your Frowns, and 'tis not to be imagined how great Encouragement, at so *easy* an *Expence*, would be given to one of the noblest Designs in the World. It would put new Life into it, and make it revive at the last Gasp: It would give new Vigour and Strength to the Cause of languishing Virtue; and it would abate the Insolence, at least, of Vice. This was a Sentiment of Honour obvious to a Heathen *Poet*,

Nobilitas sola est atque unica Virtus *.

If Men of *Quality* would favour the *Design*, it would open an easier Way for Men of *Wealth* and *Substance* to support the *Expence* of it. There is a violent Inclination to be in the Fashion: And what a Lustre would it give to your Honour in all other Respects, should it be made fashionable among us by your means, to appear openly the Friends of Virtue and Religion, and Enemies to Profaneness and Vice?

They who by the peculiar Favour of a kind Providence, are bless'd with *plentiful Fortunes*, are under particular Obligations to lay out the Gifts of Divine Bounty in

* Juv. *Satyr* 4.

the

the Service of *Virtue*, and to support the Interest of Religion in the World. You can't be insensible of the chargeable Prosecutions of the most scandalous Wickedness, where there is Money to delay the Tryal, and Cunning to evade the Laws. The Contenders for Virtue are often obliged to *defend themselves*, at considerable Cost, from malicious Suits; they are at a large Expence to spread *useful Books* and publick *Accounts* of their Proceedings, and to keep *proper Servants* for the several Purposes of the Society. And can you think it reasonable, that so great a Burden should always lie on the *Generous Few*, who first listed Themselves in this difficult Service? Would you have them despair and sink under Discouragement at last, and leave raging Wickedness to show its Head every where, and stalk, and brave it about, uncontrouled? Have you no Concern to preserve the few *Leavings* of Virtue and Piety among Us; or will you grudge the *necessary Expence* of it? Is not Vice the most expensive Thing you can maintain, and does any Thing make a greater Waste of Estates collected with Industry and Care, then when 'tis fashionable for the *Heir* of a Family to be a Rake, and the *Daughters*, Ladies of Pleasure? Are not the lewd Diversions of the Town the greatest Devourers of your Wealth? And have They any Concern for Virtue or the publick Good, who will spare Nothing out of their great Abundance to support a *Design*, which would retrench such shameful Expences, and preserve

ſerve the Morals of thoſe about them too?

How many are there who enjoy good Eſtates, by the Bleſſing of that *Peace* and *Order* which they think much to be at the *Charge* of maintaining? To prevail with ſuch, to *contribute* towards others Reformation, is a Work of as much Difficulty as the Reformation it ſelf: 'Tis ſcarce a greater Hardſhip to perſwade ſome Men to part with their *Vices*, than others with their *Money*. They look as if you came to Ruin them, when you ask them for ſomething for ſo good a Purpoſe. I wiſh they would be brought to reflect on the Unreaſonableneſs of ſuch a Conduct.

But indeed it is the Caſe of too many to be ſo Vicious *themſelves*, as to ſpend very great *Incomes*, and ſometimes their whole Eſtates, in the moſt criminal and diſorderly Manner. Such have nothing to give towards the Reforming of *others*, becauſe they have nothing to ſpare from their *own* Vices. While they reſolve to indulge themſelves at any Expence, they will never be at any Charge to lay Reſtraints upon others. And yet, if there be not *ſome Reſtraints* laid on Thoſe, who are ſet upon Vice without having Eſtates to feed it; the *Rich* vicious Man may poſſibly be couſened, or plundered, or ſome Way or other made a Prey to the Vices of the *Indigent*, before he is aware. And for this Reaſon even they who live in ſome Vices themſelves, yet ſhould be willing to contribute toward a Restraining thoſe Vices in ſuch as are about them, which

which threaten Injury to their own Persons, Families, or Estates.

There is one Sort of *wealthy* Persons, that methinks, stand peculiarly obliged to fall in with, and are even indebted to this Undertaking of the *Societies* for *Reformation*: Where any have got their Money by their *own* or *others Vices*, this is one Way of making a sort of *Restitution* to the Publick. To contribute towards a general Reformation, is an improving to the noblest Use the *Wages of Unrighteousness*, or the *Gain of Oppression*.

But then, on the other Hand, if you have raised your Fortune under the Protection of a *virtuous Regularity*, the Obligation to some Contributions is as strong from Gratitude. If Society had become what it might have been, for any thing *they care* who do nothing to prevent it, you had not now been Masters of what you have: All would have been a Prey to the strongest Invader, or the most artful Trickster.

And this I must say to *All* Men of Substance, that however you got what you have, I am sure you could not *keep* it long, or *enjoy* it with Comfort, if it were not for Restraints upon the *Sons of Riot and Violence*. They would in a little Time grow too boisterous to let you Brood over your Stores, or Bask in your pleasureable Enjoyments. If all the World were unconcerned, and stood off from the Expence which must attend Attempts for a Reformation; Vice and Wickedness would soon tear to Peices,

and destroy every thing that stood in the Way.

It would be fit to consider, how far *They* are answerable for that Immorality and Profaneness, that Drunkenness, Swearing, and Sabbath-breaking; Those many Ruins of Body and Soul, with all the Consequences of the Growth of Wickedness; I say, how far *They are answerable* for them, who do *Nothing* towards preventing them. The wealthy Man has it in his Power to do a great deal, upon *easier Terms* than submitting to the Drudgery which others will be willing to undergo. A *Yearly Subscription* from such might prove as serviceable, as the *daily Attendances* of others. There are People who wish well to the Reformation, and tell you they *pray* for its Success; but not a *Penny* will they give towards it. Whereas 'tis certain the best Laws in the World can never execute themselves. All the *Enacting* Clauses in the Statute-Book, all the *Pomp* of Authority in Parchment only, cannot make our *Acts* of *Parliament* like Engines, play of themselves. No more will good Words bear the Charges of Prosecutions. The Reformation will have but few Advocates, if it must be left to plead in *Forma Pauperis.* Starve this Cause as soon as you will, and the miserable Consequences will *involve* you and your Posterity. And it may hereafter be said over our Ruins, that we destroy'd our selves to save Charges: And Heaven may justly pronounce over Us, *Let him who is filthy be filthy still.*

n.b.

If

If while these Societies oppose their whole Force, and united Strength, backed with the Authority of Publick Laws, it is as much as they can do to make an honourable Stand, and prevent the most vile and shocking Instances of Open Wickedness; if resolved Sinners, who are a National Nuisance, can find Money, Friends and Advocates, to baffle the Laws, and by increasing the Charge of Prosecutions, make the Laws Themselves a *Terror* to Them who do well; If those Laws which fence our Property, and guard our Peace, are so often violated, and Dissoluteness and Debauchery face the Sun, and brave both God and Man; Lord God of Heaven! What would it be if there were *None who called for Justice*, or made the Laws be heard and felt by a due Execution, which is their only Significancy? The *Devil* would return upon Us with *Seven Spirits worse than the former*; and the *latter End* be *worse with us than the Beginning*. All future Attempts for a Reforming Society would be laughed out of Countenance, by the Example of the present Defeat. And the wide Desolation of an *overflowing Flood*, which had been a long Time swelling upon its Dam, and at Length had borne down all before it; would be but a faint Resemblance of the Terrors of this *Deluge of Iniquity*, which would come upon us; and which we tremble to think of, and find impossible to describe.

I would earnestly recommend it to those who excel in *Wisdom* and Prudence, and

Methods of Conduct, who are skilled in *History* and *Laws*, and the *Dispositions* of the People, to assist the SOCIETIES by their *Counsel* and *Advice*. There is scarce a greater Occasion for the Exercise of all the Wisdom and Knowledge which any Man possesses, than in *some* of the *Affairs* of the Society; where the Matter is often intricate in it self, and sometimes studiously involved and perplexed; and needs the utmost Skill and Care, that the Course of their Management may be always Regular and Just, and the least liable to Censure and Reproach. The exact Knowledge of the *Laws*, and various Precedents in *History*, may be made very serviceable to this Design; and Matters may be much illustrated and enlivened by proper Facts and Examples, and by the Testimony and Judgment of the best Men in every Age. 'Tis no small Advantage which the *Reputation* of Learning and Wisdom, as well as the Exercise of it, is capable of giving; and the *Approbation* of many of the *Bishops* and *Judges* in the *Account* of the SOCIETIES; and the many Excellent *Sermons* from some of the *Clergy*, the most Eminent for Piety and Zeal, as well as Character and Dignity in the Church, have given a considerable Credit and Strength to Them. And the united Attempts of the *Dissenting Ministers* and *Gentlemen*, with those of the *Establish'd Church*, it must be allowed, have been very serviceable. Now if Those who have the greatest Attainments in Knowledge, and Experience

ence in the Laws of the Land, and Affairs of the World, and who have often Leisure and Opportunity, would heartily concur in attending the Service, directing the Methods of Procedure, vindicating the Cause, and justifying the Conduct of the SOCIETIES; it would no doubt be a noble Addition to their present Glory, and not at all below the Highest Character, either of Wisdom or Honour.

If Men of any Figure and Reputation in the World, who have Weight and Influence, in the Places where they live, and Whom all about Them are ready to follow, and proud to conform Themselves to, were but known Favourers of the Reforming Societies, They might render them much more Considerable and Successful than They are at present.

And there is one Way of assisting them, which I would earnestly beg of All who are look'd at as *Examples* by Others; and I doubt not but every Member of the SOCIETIES would gladly set his Hand to the Request, *viz.* "That by their *own Virtuous Behaviour*, they would endeavour to correct the *Vices* and *Disorders* of Others." If Men of *Note* were more careful of their own Conduct, and Regular and Exemplary in their Lives, it would go a great way to bear down the Looseness and Corruption of the Age, and save the Societies the Labour of Reformation, and prevent them in some of the difficult Parts of their Undertaking.

'Tis

'Tis not sufficiently considered, of what Consequence the Example of the Gentry and better sort of People is, in every Neighbourhood, to Multitudes round about them: How many they might influence and lead in the Paths of Virtue by the Power of their Example; what a Credit they might give Religion by their Practice of it; and what an Awe and Restraint they might lay upon licentious Wickedness. And what have They to answer for, who by their lewd Lives and Irregularities corrupt a whole Neighbourhood, keep Vice in Countenance, and are the Ornaments and Supports of the Devil's Kingdom in the World? Such Men do more to debauch the World, than a whole Society is able to retrieve; and at the same time They make the greatest *Occasion* for Them, They become the greatest *Obstruction* to their Success.

They who can do no more, might at least be Useful in assisting Others by their *Time* and *Pains*; Acting under Those who are Principal in the Societies, and putting in Execution the Measures concerted. And tho' I would have none engage in a Matter of this Nature, to the Neglect of their *Families* and their *Business*; for that would bring a Reflection upon the Reformation, and be a Disorder fit to be reformed; yet there are Many Persons who are not able to do much perhaps to direct, or support, who might spend *some Hours* now and then in this Service, without any Prejudice to their *own Affairs*, and to the great Benefit of the

the SOCIETIES. Many Hands employed in the ſeveral Parts of the Work, would mightily animate and encourage all that are concerned; and at the ſame time would leſſen the Charge, and make the greater Diſpatch. And can you be engaged in nobler Buſineſs, more pleaſing to God, beneficial to your Country, or delightful to your ſelves, if you have ever felt the Power of true Love to God, or Beneficence to Mankind? Might not many leiſure Hours, ſauntered away in uſeleſs Viſits and idle Chat, in haunting Coffee-Houſes and enquiring News, be more profitably redeemed for ſuch a Purpoſe? Are there None of the Friends of Virtue and Religion among the *lower Orders* of Men, who can boaſt of as true a Zeal, and ſincere Intention, as any of more exalted Stations, and greater Advantages?

You cannot ſay *You are Unconcerned*; for 'tis the Buſineſs of every good *Chriſtian*, of every good *Man*, of every good *Citizen*, to do what is in his Power, to prevent the Diſſolution of Manners, and the Ruin of Virtue, and his Fellow Citizens. And is it not in your Power to be of ſome Service in this Caſe? Can't you come upon *Offices* when *legally* called to Them; and when you are in Them, aſſiſt the Societies to your utmoſt? Don't decline the honourable Service, tho' Difficulty and Hazard may ſometimes attend it, under the Call of Providence, and in the Way of your Duty; but know, if you are acted by right Principles,

ples, tho' in the lower Services of publick Reformation, you are bearing a Part in the noblest Design, and will share in the glorious *Recompence of Reward.*

Again, can't you lend your Help sometimes towards the suppressing of Vice, by assisting to *take up* and to *convict* Offenders? Perhaps you will say, That to turn *Informers*, is to expose your selves to so much Hatred and Contempt, and may bring so many Losses or Inconveniencies upon you, that you are not for being concerned in this Way. To which it may be *replied*, That a great part of the Reproach cast upon *Informers of Vice*, is a real Glory; and the Losses sustain'd one way, may be abundantly made up another.

n.b. An *Informer* was indeed justly hated and spoken against, when it was the Business of such to break up *Religious Assemblies*, and to hale Men and Women before the *Magistrate*, for no other Crime but *worshipping God according to their Consciences.* For my part, I am not for Peoples going to inform even against the present *Nonjurors*, merely on account of their *separate Worship.* To get Possession of Mens GOODS, or to extort large *Fines* from them, as some Informers were wont to do, merely for Differences in Religion, is a Scandal to me, on all Hands; But to break up *Houses* of *Lewdness*; and to bring common *Swearers* and *Cursers*, and *Profaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, to such Punishment as the *Law* appoints, in order to their *Reformation* and *Amendment*; this surely, instead

ſtead of bringing Reproach, muſt procure Veneration? In the Opinion of the wiſer and better Part of the World it will certainly do ſo: And that ſecret Teſtimony which you have on your ſide, even in the Breaſts of *Offenders* themſelves, will make ſome of them reverence you; And as for thoſe who become profligate and hardened in their Impieties, one would rather glory in their Reproaches than in their Applauſes.

I am ſenſible indeed, that of late Years the *Informers* and *Proſecutors* of Immoralities, have been generally ſpoken againſt; and by ſome of the Better Part of the World too. The Detecting of an Immorality (as I am inform'd) in *One* that a certain Lord *Chief Juſtice* had a Reſpect for, made him an Enemy to the Agents for the Reformers ever after; And the Courts of *Judicature* took a Turn againſt them by his means, which for ſome time proved an unſpeakable Diſadvantage to them: It has alſo been often publiſh'd to the World, "that "*Conſtables* and *Others*, who never were "concern'd in the SOCIETIES, have taken "*Bribes* of *Lewd* Perſons; and have been "guilty of *indiſcreet*, and ſometimes of "*wicked* Practices, the *Scandal* of whoſe "Miſdemeanours is thrown at the Door of "the *Informers*." But when any through particular Pique, or Falſhood, are thus aſpers'd; one would never decline appearing in a *good Cauſe* for the ſake of ſuch Aſperſions.

Besides, there are several sorts of *Informers*, that may help to bring this Name into Contempt at present, who act quite in another Sphere to that of the SOCIETIES for *Reformation*. I am told there are Those whose *Business* it is to inform of *Hawkers*, *Pedlers*, *Runners of Goods*, and the like Offenders against the *Laws* of the *Land*; and there are others that inform against *Bakers*, *Victuallers*, and other *Traders*, who sell under *Weight* and *Measure*. Upon what Principle these People act, whether out of Regard to the *Law* or their *own Interest*; and what Opinion is to be form'd of them, I shall not here go about to determine.

But the Members of the SOCIETIES for *Reformation*, who inform against those *Crying Sins which* it is their Concern to suppress, are known to act upon the best of *Principles*, and with the most *disinterested Views*.

If any of their *Agents* have not shewn a *consummate Prudence*, or been able in *all things* to act as one would wish; why, this methinks should provoke some others to be *active*: And instead of deserting the Work, to take it out of such as they esteem weak Hands, and do all they can to promote it more effectually, and recommend it to the World.

Upon the whole of what I have offered concerning this Matter, I hope that none will be discouraged by that Artifice of the Enemies of the Reformation, a representing the Actors in it under the odious Character of *Informers*: As if they were acting a Partial

tial and Mercenary Part, busily intermeddling with Others Affairs, and needlessly disturbing their Neighbour's Repose. There is great Ambiguity and Deceit, as I have shewn, in the use of the Word *Informer:* There is a Sense of it the most hateful and abhorred; When loose and profane People, oftentimes the lowest, as well as the vilest of Men, from Greediness of Hire, and Hatred of Goodness, are employed to hunt out the Meetings of Religious People for the Worship of God, and disturb Them in their Way to Heaven; wreaking their Malice, and making their Fortunes, by the Prosecutions and Ruins of innocent People, who were designing their *own Good*, and doing *no Injury* to any Other: There is an Infamy rests upon the Characters of *those Informers*, who executed *unrighteous* Laws under the Influence of *Popish* Councils; Laws that were voted injurious by Parliaments then in Being, and abrogated by the wiser Princes and Parliaments ever since: N. B.

But now when Good and Virtuous Men, out of Zeal to GOD, and Compassion to Men, endeavour to rescue the Ensnared from Courses of destructive Wickedness; to execute *just* and *righteous* Laws, and prevent the Judgment of GOD upon the Publick; the Idea of *Informer* is entirely altered. The *Odium* quite vanishes. 'Tis a laudable and useful Zeal, to prevent Personal and Publick Mischief, and promote the Interest and Welfare of the Whole Community.

'Tis certain, that merely to *inform* Against Any is no ill Thing: for every Loyal Subject, from the greatest Peer of the Land, to the meanest Peasant, who has taken the Oath of Allegiance, is obliged to inform against *Treasons* and Designs of Mischief to the Sovereign and the Government; and 'tis *Misprision* of Treason, to conceal or cover a known Design of it in Any. And will not an Upright Concern for the Glory of God, and the General Good, justify an equal Regard, and oblige every One who stands listed under the *Banner* of Christ, and engaged in the Christian *Warfare*, to detect and punish open Enemies to the *Sovereign* of the World, and the *Societies* to which They belong? Nor is it the Ruin or Hurt of Any which is intended: But the Shame and Punishment of open Wickedness, is in order to reclaim men, and so to prevent Their *Own* Ruin and *Others* Hurt. Our Reformers stand ready to embrace Them upon their Return. And, as many have been recovered from Courses of Wickedness by the Society's Endeavours; so, some have joined with them, like the Apostle *Paul*, in supporting a Design which once they destroyed. They owe their Recovery to the Reforming Societies, and pay their Acknowledgments in cheerful Service toward the Recovery of Others.

And now let me ask what in all the World can be looked upon as a *Greater*, or more *Universal* Concern? To see, that God be not despised and blasphemed by his own

Crea-

Creatures, and in his own World: That *Societies* be not thrown into Confusion, or Disbanded, by the entire Failure of Virtue and Honesty from among us: That *Cities* be not overthrown by the Impieties and Iniquities which abound in Them: That the *Publick Worship* do not come to be blasphemed and abused, or totally neglected, or vainly and to no Purpose attended upon: That *Families* be not corrupted and broken to Pieces by the growing Disorders of vicious Members; and that they who are above private Corrections and Reproofs, or have found out Methods to escape, and get out of the Way of them, may not go on to debauch and ruin others without Punishment and Restraint: That *Men* may not be left to the *Natural Effect* and *Consequence* of prevailing Vices; to grow Insolent in their Tempers, and throw Contempt upon every Thing that is regular and orderly; despising *Governments* and *Magistrates*, and the *Ministers* of Religion, and *All* who have any *Sobriety* among their Neighbours. Such Considerations are great enough, one would think, to rowse the Concern of every Man, who either loves his *Country*, his *Family*, his *Friends* and *Relations*, or his *own Soul*.

And this is a Concern as *Universal* as it is *Great*; and extends to all Ranks and Orders of Men, who upon peculiar Accounts, are deeply interested, and obliged, to do all they can for the Restraining of Vice,

and

and encouragement of Virtue. Every Man who has a Family of his own, ſhould beſtir himſelf to prevent the Corruption of his Children, and Servants. And I don't ſee how any Man can anſwer it to himſelf to neglect that which might either ſave the Publick, or any private and particular Perſon, when there are Societies erected for this very Purpoſe, and every Man may be ſome Way or other ſerviceable to Them, and aſſiſted by Them.

Who that has any Reverence for God and Religion, any Love to Virtue, or Good Will to Mankind, can look unconcerned, while Profaneneſs and Debauchery bid Defiance to Laws, and ſpread uncontrouled? Was it not a noble Attempt in Thoſe who firſt endeavoured to ſtem the Tide, and oppoſe the Increaſe of Wickedneſs, by helping forward the Execution of wholſome Laws? And is it not a brave Spirit which has carried them thro' it, at no little Expence to Themſelves, and againſt much Oppoſition from the united Forces of Thoſe They would endeavour to reform? This has been their Caſe, whilſt too Many who would paſs for the Friends of Virtue, have ſatisfied Themſelves with *Wiſhing* Them Good Succeſs; but have given no Countenance to their Proceedings, nor contributed any Thing to their Help.

What ſhould be the *Original* of this Indifference? Are Men afraid to appear on the Side of Virtue and Piety, or aſhamed

to

to own that they are among their Friends? Or do they think it an unneceſſary Intermeddling in Affairs which don't belong to them? They would not have the ſame Apprehenſions if a Fire were kindled in their Neighbourhood, or a Peſtilential Diſtemper ſpreading around them. They would think Themſelves concerned to do all in their Power to ſtop the Progreſs. And ſhall ſpreading Debauchery make daily Waſte of the ſmall Remains of Virtue among Us, and from Time to Time fill up the Meaſure of our Sins, and will any Good Man think it Unneceſſary, or Officious, to help to prevent the deadly Miſchief? Is it not every Man's Concern in his Place to promote the Intereſt, and prevent the Ruin of Virtue? Is not prevailing Wickedneſs pernicious to all Communities, and the ruinous Effects obvious to every Eye? Do's it not make Children Diſſolute and Rebellious; Servants, Negligent and Injurious; Magiſtrates, Indolent or Oppreſſive; Traders Remiſs or Laviſh; and all Ranks of Men, Slaves to a vile Inclination, and unattentive to proper Employs? And muſt not this tend to conſume the Spirits and untie the Bands of all Society? And has that Man any Concern for the Publick Intereſt, or his own, which is involved in it, who can look on unmoved, and remain unengaged?

In Caſes of common Danger, every Man is intereſted; and he muſt be either inſenſible

ble of the Danger, or have no Regard to the common Welfare, who has no Concern. But who, that can ſee and think at all, cannot ſee the Danger in ſuch a Caſe? And is that Man worthy the Name of a *Citizen*, who has no Regard to the Welfare of Others, or to prevent the Ruin of the Community? I hope all the Men of Virtue among us, whether in higher or lower Stations, will be aſhamed of a Pretence which carries ſo much Slighting to Virtue and Good Manners; and ſo great a Diſregard to the Honour, Intereſt and Proſperity of the Publick. For, what! is it none of my Concern whether my Children are Dutiful and Virtuous, whether my Servants are Frugal and Diligent; whether my Neighbours are Honeſt and Friendly; whether my Countrymen are Perſons of Sobriety and Integrity, or univerſally Corrupt and Diſſolute? And whether my Native Country be a Scene of all manner of Lewdneſs, Irregularity and Uproar; or a Scene of Peace, good Order, and Sobriety? In a Word, Is it not my Concern whether my Country is ruined, or preſerved; and my Own as well as the Publick Intereſts, and Thoſe of Poſterity as well as the preſent Age, be loſt, or ſav'd?

Are all Mankind unconcerned at the licentious Progreſs of Vice, and not aſhamed of this Indifference? Or do they reckon the Attempt deſperate, and that the Societies muſt diſband? The Neglect of thoſe Friends of Virtue and of their Country, whoſe Cauſe I am pleading, is what I am per-

am perſwaded gives Them the greateſt Diſcouragement, and is a Mortification beyond the Oppoſition and Reſentment of Thoſe whom They would reform.

But let any Man conſider the *Rules*, by which the SOCIETIES propoſe to Themſelves to act, and I apprehend no Prejudices will lie againſt them, amongſt the wiſe and ſober Part of the World: It will rather be the Concern of every *Good Man* to encourage and aſſiſt them. They are under peculiar *Obligations* from their own Rules, to act with *true Humility of Heart*; a *diſintereſted Mind*; *habitual Prayer*; *unfeigned Charity to all Men*; and *Reſignation to the Divine Providence in all Events which may befall them.* And as they act upon the nobleſt Principles, ſo is their Spirit and Conduct the moſt Generous. The Deſign which they are purſuing, has been rendered very coſtly by *Suits* and incidental *Charges*, as well as by a neceſſary ſtated Expence: And yet upon the Conviction of Offenders, that *Half* which the Law allows to the Informer, they conſtantly remit to the *Poor* of the *Pariſh*, to prevent any Umbrage of ſelfiſh and mercenary Views.

And can any Man make a Pretence that there is ill Deſign, or diſhonourable Acting, to diſcourage his ready Concurrence with the SOCIETIES? Or can there be wanting a cheerful Zeal, in a Cauſe which includes the moſt eminently Wiſe and Good on *one Side*, and all the looſe profligate Part of

the World on *the other?* I am not without Hope that God will yet put Life and Spirit into this glorious Undertaking, and make it revive and flourish. However, I have the Satisfaction of contributing my sincere Endeavours, as an Author, to serve it: And if it finally miscarry (which God forbid!) I trust that no Share of the Blame will be laid at my Door.

FINIS.

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